Encounter

MICHAEL YOUNG

The Rise of the Meritocracy

Extracts from a Ph.D. thesis submitted to the London School of Economics in 2033 A.D.

WILLIAM H. WHYTE JR.

The City Eviscerated

GERD RUGE

Conversations in Moscow

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Michael Young

The Rise of the Meritocracy

Extracts from a Ph.D. thesis, submitted to the London School of Economics in 2033 *A.D.*

In feudal times the country was governed by neither caste nor class, rather by a combination of both. For hundreds of years, blood shared power with brain; long after the withering of the hereditary principle had begun to concentrate ability at the top, each class—however lowly—still possessed its superior men and women. The upper classes had their fair share of geniuses and morons, so did the workers; or I should say, since a few brilliant or fortunate workingmen always managed to climb to the top, the inferior classes contained almost as high a proportion of superior people as the upper classes themselves. Each social class was, in ability, a miniature of society itself; the part the same as the whole. In those circumstances, universal suffrage was only facing the facts. To give equal weight to each class was as good a way as any other of securing a parliament of talent.

The fundamental change of the last century, which was fairly begun before 1963, is that intelligence has been re-distributed between the classes, and the nature of the classes changed. The talented have been given the opportunity to rise to the level which accords with their capacities, and the lower classes consequently reserved for those who are also lower in ability. The part is no longer the same as the whole. This has happened because if Britain was to survive as a great nation—great, that is, in comparison with others—it had to make better use of its human material, above all of the talent which was always too scarce. Schools and industries were progressively thrown open to merit, so that the clever children of each generation had opportunity for ascent. The ranks of the scientists and technologists, the artists and the teachers, have been swelled, their education shaped to their high genetic density, their power for good increased. For every Rutherford there have in modern times been ten such, for every Keynes two, and even Elgar has had a successor.

Nowadays the able children of manual workers are elevated as a matter of course. They do not regard a political career as either their interest or their duty. Interest does not bid them wait upon a fickle electorate; duty calls them to serve society by filling a post of the highest responsibility, which parliament, for 98 per cent of M.P.s, can no longer offer. Modern Bevans are at Harwell and Skye. Yet the lower classes, although progressively denuded of ability, have not stopped electing their own kind. They have clung to their democratic rights, with the result that the level of IQ in parliament has fallen progressively. The elected representatives of the common people no longer have the brains; and they no longer wield the real power.

To cope with this problem two main alternative solutions have been proposed, the first revolutionary, the second evolutionary. The "revolutionaries" have demanded that

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form should be brought into line with reality and either parliament abolished or election made dependent on an IQ qualification. They have also sought proportional representation, whereby the number of votes a man has would be proportional to his intelligence. All this was surely short-sighted. As our ancestors used to say, no one but the wearer knows where the shoe is pinching. Whenever decisions cause suffering, the ordinary man should be able to express his grievance to his M.P. When this right exists, the civil service, and even the social scientists, are kept ever alert. Moreover, simple issues arise from time to time on which the opinion of the ordinary man (when advised by the competent authorities) is as valuable as the opinion of the meritocracy, and on these rare occasions we lose nothing by giving the House of Commons the chance to air its views.

By a typically British compromise, the purpose of the revolutionaries has been partly achieved not by abolishing the Commons but by reconstituting the Lords. Thorough-going reform was for many years opposed by members of the Labour Party on the significant ground that once the House of Lords ceased to be a hereditary chamber its prestige would be so high as to challenge the Commons. Better, they said, to let the House of Lords die. In the prevailing mental climate, the objection (however well-founded) could not indefinitely be sustained. Mr. Wedgwood Benn, a socialist spokesman of the 50s, put the more enlightened view when he said:

> "It is important to remember exactly what Labour's objection to the present House of Lords really is. It does not stem primarily from the weakness or unfairness of the system of creating peers so much as from the absurdity of the inherited element."

The Labour Party ended up as active for reform as their opponents. The restriction of membership to life peers, women as well as men, chosen from among the most eminent people in the Kingdom, the payment of generous honoraria, eventually the banning of hereditary peers—these reforms made the upper chamber into a body far more influential than its junior partner. Selection largely replaced election. The instrument of the aristocracy was by one brilliant stroke converted into the instrument of the meritocracy. The hold of the Lords on Parliament was assured when, by a constitutional convention, the Ministry of Education was in all cabinets reserved to the upper chamber. The House of Lords is now quite as distinguished as the Central Committee of the Communist Party which contains the appointed élite of China.

The evolutionary way was to compensate for the inevitable weakness of parliament by strengthening the civil service. Nourished by first-class selection in the schools and first-class training in the universities, buttressed by the tradition and camaraderie of more than a century's unselfish devotion to duty, the collective competence of the civil service has, with only a few setbacks, continued to soar. Confronted with this composite wisdom, nearly all amateur politicians in Ministerial office have been content to take the glory and abandon the power. The dangerous exception is the politician so stupid or so vain that he does not even recognise his own incompetence. He may, like Queen Victoria, actually demand that his nominal power be made real. Part of the lore of the civil service consists in the accumulated knowledge of how to defeat such a pretension. I am speaking of thirty years ago. Fortunately there have been no Prince Alberts in the parliaments of this century. As conflict in society has been reduced, the civil servants, now that they no longer need keep aloof, have taken a more active part in politics to make up for the devitalisation of the two-party system. Both they and the vital House of Lords belong to a self-perpetuating meritocracy of growing power.

The House of Commons has not yet followed the cow into oblivion—let us hope it never will—let us hope, it has now, like the monarchy, found a permanent niche in the constitution, the old merging in the new, the new in the old, on a higher level.

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THE historian's puzzle is why the Labour Party lasted so long: what could more perfectly illustrate the principle of inertia in society? Like democracy itself, the Labour Party was a reaction against the feudal tradition. It arose out of the old working-class as it was called, which had such solidarity because its name belied it: it was not so much class as caste. Universal suffrage in the 19th and 20th centuries gave political power to the workers. They held together and, advancement of other kinds being partly denied to them, made full use of this political power to challenge high-caste authority. Able and ambitious leaders whose individual ascent was barred by the hereditary system bent their efforts to improve the lot of their class as a whole—their class and not just themselves within it! A whole class was to rise, quite without respect to the capacity of its members!

They formed a mighty army, until they stormed the citadel and opened the gates to talent. With victory the army began to dwindle into brigades, platoons and then, at last, into lone snipers. By the 1970s the outstanding children of manual fathers were no longer gravely handicapped by their origin. On the strength of sheer individual merit they could rise up the social ladder as far as their ability would stretch. This was a boon to them and a boon as well to their parents. But for the working class as a whole the victory was a defeat. Sated by conquest, the class began to crumble from within. More and more parents began to harbour ambitions for their children rather than for their class. The cult of the child became the opium of the people. Inspired by hope, vitalised by ambition, the whole nation began to advance as never before.

The Labour Party made the inevitable compromise with the new society it had done so much to create: it ceased to exist. Fewer and fewer electors, however brawny, responded instinctively to the appeal of "labour." Drawn upwards by their aspirations for their children, all but the *lumpen proletariat*, to re-adopt a term still in vogue in the first half of the century, conceived of themselves as a cut above the labourer at the bottom of the heap. "Workers" became a discredited word. The canny leaders of the mid-century Labour Party (which still contained many highly competent men) recognised full well the need for change. They scrapped the appeal to working-class solidarity and concentrated on the middle class, partly to capture new sections of the electorate, more to keep pace with their own supporters who had, in their outlook, moved upwards from their point of origin. One of the symptoms of rampant ambition was the upgrading by name alone of occupations which could not be upgraded in any other way. We no longer have to be so hypocritical. We can recognise inferiority and dare to label it so. But in those days rat-catchers were called "rodent officers," sanitary inspectors "public health inspectors," and lavatory cleaners "amenities attendants." Employers conformed to the changing mores by dismissing their "workers" and hiring none but technicians, clothed in white coats instead of dungarees. The Labour Party finally made the same adjustment. "Labour" was a millstone; "worker" was taboo; "technician" was the obvious substitute. And so the modern Technicians Party was born, catering in the broadest possible manner for technicians by hand and by brain.

THE trade unions followed. The Transport and General Workers Union became the Transport and General Technicians Union, and the National Union of General and Municipal Workers, the National Union of General and Municipal Technicians. This did not altogether save them from the competition of that other great general union, the Association of Supervisory Staffs and Engineering Technicians, which had the advantage of correct name and status from the start. The Mineworkers became the Mine Technicians (still a force in the early days of the Technicians Party), the Woodworkers the Wood Technicians, the Textile Workers the Textile Technicians, the Clerical Workers the Office Technicians, and so forth. Likewise the

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Technical Unions Congress. Higher grades had to notch up their own classification in order to maintain the vital differentials of status. Laboratory technicians could not, for instance, retain such a designation without being confused with the mere charring technicians who cleaned the lab. floors. They styled themselves laboratory specialists, and for the same reason certain of the unions (other than ASSET) adopted new names—the Association of Building Technicians, for instance, became the ABS and the Association of Psychological Technicians the APS. The Association of Scientific Workers, even after it had amalgamated with the Association of Local Government Sociologists, considered ASS not altogether appropriate, and so boldly adopted the title of Benefactors—the ASB as it is now justly esteemed far beyond the circles whose immediate work lies in the benefactories and compartment stores.

The high-IQ unions have exercised influence in the TUC disproportionate to their numbers, if not yet quite proportionate to their intelligence. They have helped to speed the transformation of work into play as fast as the play of the meritocracy has (for the assessment of income) been converted into work. They have helped to concentrate the attention of the technical unions on adult education of the modern sort. They have exposed the IQ-crammers. They led the successful campaign for the adoption of the metric system in weights, measures, and money. They have taught their technical colleagues to take a sober view of the rôle of the Technicians Party in the modern state. All the time they have had to battle against the sentimentalists. The old egalitarianism could not be wiped out overnight, and the sentimentalists have continued to praise the virtues of the good old days and protest, in the name of equality, against every advance towards social justice.

To appreciate how far we have come, cast your mind back to a meeting of the tripartite National Joint Council for Industry, say, in 1950. There sat Ministers of the Crown with representatives of the TUC, the FBI, and the public corporations. Did any group have more ability than another? Were the trade unionists out-manœuvred in argument because they left school at thirteen or fourteen while the leaders of private industry had been to Cambridge and the chiefs of the public corporations to Sandhurst? Were the trade union leaders at a disadvantage because they were shoved into a factory at an age when the others were still in short trousers? Obviously not—if anything the advantage was the other way round. The trade unionists not only spoke from longer experience. They included some of the ablest men in the country. The sharing of power between the classes was the natural consequence of sharing the intelligence. These leaders commanded the confidence of the followers from whose ranks they came, and deserved to. Many of them were Ministers in the first, second, third, and fourth Labour Cabinets, before the decline set in. The ability of the miners' leaders was especially high, for in colliery villages there were no other jobs for young men to take and little prospect of promotion to the middle class. It was not fully appreciated in the 1950s and 1960s that these folk heroes were not being succeeded by others equally able; the children of top grade unionists and Labour Ministers, and of other outstanding workingmen, were not becoming manual workers themselves. They were in attendance at grammar schools and universities, training for science, commerce and the professions.

Contrast the present—think how different is a meeting in the 2020s of the National Joint Council, which has been retained only for form's sake. On the one side sit the IQs of 140, on the other the IQs of 99. On the one side the intellectual magnates of our day, on the other honest, horny-handed workmen more at home with dusters than documents. On the one side the solid confidence born of hard-won achievement; on the other the consciousness of a just inferiority. The trade unionists' ponderous, carefully rehearsed reflections have no more influence upon their colleagues, if we are frank with ourselves,

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than a pea-shooter upon an astro-rocket. Primed with their sociological surveys the civil servants know more about the state of opinion in the factories than the stewards who work in them. The union leaders seldom have the insight to see that the courtesy with which they are treated is pure formality. They do not know that instead of the substance of power, they are being flattered by its shadow.

We do not need to ask why. The schools have begun to do their proper job of social selection—that is all. Once the long-called-for reforms were made, none of the ablest children in the country, unless by an unfortunate mistake, had to take up manual work. They were trained by something better than the "Workers Educational Association" (*sic*). Twenty years after 1944 the brilliant children of manual workers automatically went to the best grammar schools in their district, from there to Oxford and Cambridge, and when they came down they were eligible for travelling scholarships and grants for the Imperial College of Science, the Inns of Court, and the Administrative Staff College. The Keir Hardies of later generations have been the star civil servants, physicists, psychologists, chemists, business executives, and music critics of their day.

Amongst children who left school for manual jobs in the 1940s one in twenty still had IQs over 120; in the 1950s—after the Education Act was working—there was one in fifty; by the 1970s only one in a thousand. By the last decade of the century, the supply of really capable workingmen to fill the top union posts had dried up completely, and long before that the fall in quality amongst local union and workshop officials, especially amongst the younger men, had become very marked indeed. I should say that the rule of promotion by seniority, to which the unions remained attached, was not such a brake as it was in industry, because the older officials were on the whole more able. Intelligence is, of course, by no means the only quality required by a union leader; they also need belligerence, doggedness, and empathy. But although intelligence is not the only quality, it is a necessary one, and the new leaders have been dreadfully handicapped by its absence.

How is it, then, that the unions have kept going at all? They have been saved by three kinds of adjustment—by the strengthening of their appointed staff, simplification of their functions, and enhancement of their respectability. First, the weaknesses of the electoral method have been partially offset, in the trade unions as in parliament, by reinforcing the appointed "civil service." Very few university graduates have been elected as officials of manual unions, but increasingly, if far too slowly, the executive committees, conscious of the ever growing complexity of the economy, impressed by the growing prestige of the universities, and aware of the need to make as good a show as possible with the employers and the government, have themselves appointed graduates to their research, production, and public relations departments. The Labour Party led in welcoming as M.P.s men from Winchester and other élite schools and then from the universities to replace the able manual workers who did not exist any more; after a time-lag the Unions did likewise with their officials. The universities have responded with special courses for suitable candidates who, despite high IQs, are tactful enough to suffer fools gladly—a very necessary quality for the advisers of union executives. The notable sandwich course at the Leeds Institute of Technology prescribes a period in the ranks to gain practical experience; union and management cadets work happily together on the factory floor. The unions have incorporated into their top echelons many graduates who, if not of the first rank, are still good second-raters in the 115–120 IQ range.

The unions have been preserved by men like Lord Wiffen. To appreciate the excellence of his qualifications one need do no more than compare his career with that of Ernest Bevin, who had no education worth the name:

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Lord Wiffen

(Born: August 9th, 1957.
Bradford. Father, spinner)

Age	
5–11	A Stream Primary School: IQ 120
11	11-plus exam.: IQ 121
13	Bradford Grammar School: IQ 119
14	
15	
16	6th form: IQ 118
18	State scholarship, Cambridge University: IQ 120 Subsequently 2nd class B.Sc. (Sociology) and M.Sc. (Mental Testing)
28	Lecturer on Human Relations in Industry. Acton Technical College: IQ 123
29	Commonwealth Fellow, Harvard University: IQ 115
32	Deputy Research Officer, United Textile Factory Technicians Union: IQ 115
34	
41	Research Officer of Union: IQ 114
59	KCTUC, Secretary of Union. Member of General Council: IQ 116
64	Raised to peerage: IQ 116
72	Chairman Education Committee TUC: IQ 112
76	Assistant Lecturer, Acton Technical College (where he now is): IQ 110

Mr. Ernest Bevin

(Born: March 9th, 1881.
Winsford, Somerset.
Father, farm labourer)

Age	
5–11	Learnt to read and write at village school
11	Left school to take job as farm-boy
13	Kitchen boy, Bristol
14	Grocer's errand boy
15	Van boy
16	Tram conductor, then van boy again
18	Drayman
28	Secretary, Bristol Right to Work Committee
29	Secretary, Bristol Carmen's Branch of the Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Labourers Union
32	Assistant National Organiser of Union
34	National Organiser of Union
41	General Secretary, Transport and General Workers Union
59	Minister of Labour
64	Foreign Secretary

Walter Wiffen and his like have given the leadership which the Bevins once gave to the manual workers.

THE second adjustment is that the functions of the trade unions have, in a more sensibly organised society, become almost completely routine, so that there is very little call for initiative or innovation. Shop stewards and local officials are no longer any match for the employers, but this matters very little now that any negotiations there are about wages and conditions have become fully centralised at the national level, where the influence of the paid staff is predominant. The British Productivity Council has continuously fed the unions with publicity material, films, and cartoons for their members, and the National Joint Council has also become ever more vital since it assumed responsibility for the annual price review. None but trained statisticians can follow the complexities of the review, so the experts employed by the Unions settle the details in discussion with their colleagues from the Central Statistical Office. Up till last May there had been no "strike" since the one at Leamington in 1991.

Third, the trade unions have, like the monarchy, been given an ever more honourable place in the social order. Today there is not a national body of any consequence on which they are unrepresented. Joint consultation has been carried so far by the government as well as by every employer that the unions are told, at least a day or two in advance of the public pronouncement, of nearly every important decision. Now that the Royal Order of the TUC has been created and all members of the General Council knighted automatically on election, now that the award of honours to rank-and-file workmen has been multiplied, courtesy and intelligence have retrieved what might admittedly have become a very ugly situation. Some malcontents claim there is a basic lack of sympathy between the paid staff and the union rank-and-file. Any sociologist must recognise the danger. But the remedy is not to move backwards into a past golden only in imagination. The remedy is, as the universities have realised, to perfect the social surveys and opinion polls which are the eyes and ears of the *intelligent* public.

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Lionel Trilling

The Last Lover

Vladimir Nabokov's "Lolita"

VLADIMIR Nabokov's novel *Lolita* was first published in Paris in 1955. Its reputation was not slow to reach the country in which it had been written and in which, presumably, it could not be published. Reviews of the book appeared in some of the more advanced literary journals, and in 1956 *The Anchor Review* published a sizable portion of the novel, together with a thoughtful comment on the whole work by F. W. Dupee. Copies of the book, in the pleasant substantial paperbound format which the Olympia Press devised for it, were brought back to the United States by returning travellers and were passed from hand to hand in a manner somewhat reminiscent of the early circulation of *Ulysses* in the 'twenties and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in the 'thirties.

I use the qualifying *somewhat* because the borrowing and lending of *Lolita* did not proceed in the aura of righteous indignation which attended the private circulation of the two earlier books. The bland acceptance of what would once have been called censorship and denounced as such—actually there never was an American legal ruling on *Lolita*, only a caginess on the part of the American publishers—was perhaps the result of a general cultural change from the 'twenties and 'thirties, an aspect of the diminished capacity for indignation that has often been noted. Or it may imply the recognition that Mr. Nabokov's book, in tune with the temper of the times, is very much less weighty and solemn than Joyce's or Lawrence's, that it does not proclaim itself to be, and is not, a work of genius. Or, again, it may suggest that readers have discovered that *Lolita* really is, as the conditions of its first publication would lead us to suppose, a shocking and scandalous book.

Certainly its scandalous reputation was affirmed by the action of the French government in suppressing it. When I was in Paris some eighteen months ago, I tried to buy a copy, and as I stood at that foremost counter in Galignani's on which are piled the standard dirty books for tourists, I was told by the clerk that the sale of *Lolita* had been made illegal just the day before. This was at a time when the French were going in for suppressing books on a rather large scale. I heard it said that they were doing so in response to representations made by the English government, which was concerned to stop the flow of indecent or questionable literature across the Channel. Perhaps this was true, although it is really not necessary to account in any special and elaborate way for the displays of literary squeamishness that the French make every now and then. But this time their heart was not in it, and shortly after my visit *Lolita* became again available.

So much for the pre-history of *Lolita*. Now the book has been brought out by an American publishing firm of entire respectability and everyone may buy it and read it and judge it for himself.*

* The latest information we have about the prospect of the book's being published in this country is that British publishers are still being cagey.—*Ed.*

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THE legitimising of *Lolita* must not mislead us about its nature. It must not tempt us into taking the correct enlightened attitude—"Well, now, what was all the fuss about? Here is the book brought into the full light of day, and of course we can very plainly see that there is nothing shocking about it." The fact is that *Lolita* is indeed a shocking book. It means to be shocking and it succeeds in its intention.

But it is not shocking in the way that books which circulate in secret are usually said to be shocking. I shall presently try to say in what ways—there are several—the book does, or should, shock us. Now I shall simply report that *Lolita* is not pornographic as that word would be used in any legal complaint that might conceivably be made against it.

I specify the legal use of the word in order to distinguish that from my own use of it. As I used the word, its meaning is neutrally descriptive, not pejorative.* I take it to mean the explicit representation in literature (or the graphic arts—or music, for that matter) of the actual sexual conduct of human beings. (I suppose I should include anthropomorphic gods, demons, etc.) It seems to me that this representation is a perfectly acceptable artistic enterprise. I expect that, if it is carried out with some skill, it will raise lustful thoughts in the reader, and I believe that this in itself provides no ground for objection.

I should like to be entirely clear on this point. I am not taking the position of liberal and progressive lawyers and judges. I am not saying that literature should be permitted its moments of pornography because such moments are essential to the moral truth which a particular work of literature is aiming at; or because they are essential to its objective truth; or because, when taken in context, they cannot really arouse the normal mature reader to thoughts of lust. I am saying that I see no reason in morality (or in aesthetic theory) why literature should not have as one of its intentions the arousing of thoughts of lust. It is one of the effects, perhaps one of the functions, of literature to arouse desire, and I can discover no ground for saying that sexual pleasure should not be among the objects of desire which literature presents to us, along with heroism, virtue, peace, death, food, wisdom, God, etc.

This, as I say, is not the position taken by the liberal lawyers and judges. And having read a good many of the American legal opinions in matters of literary censorship, I have come to think that the liberal line of argument, although it comes out on the right side in some ways, is shallow and evasive. I have been told by lawyers that there is no other way for them to go about things, that they must defend indicted books by taking a hypocritical view of their sexual passages, owlishly arguing that these passages when "read in context" have no special significance or effect, that they are "essential" to the "total artistic effect of the work." No doubt the forensic necessity is what the lawyers say it is, but their submission to it does not advance the cause of honesty.

My position in this matter does not lead me to argue that censorship is always indefensible. My use of the word pornographic follows, of course, that of D. H. Lawrence in his famous essay, "Pornography and Obscenity," and I go along with Lawrence in distinguishing the pornographic from the obscene. It seems to me that if we are going to be frank in our demand that sexuality be accepted as an element of human life which should be available to literature as any other, we must be no less frank in recognising its unique nature as a literary subject. For most people it is the very most interesting subject, the subject that is most sought for, even though with shame and embarrassment. It is, if we look at it truthfully, a uniquely influential subject—no part of the individual life is so susceptible to literature as the sexual expectations and emotions. As Lawrence said in effect, there are discriminations to be made among kinds of lust, of which some tend to humanise, others to dehumanise us. This

* I am aware that a pejorative meaning, is, as it were, built into the word, that it derives from *porne*, the Greek word for prostitute. But we have no other word to express the idea; and the attempt to invent a prettier one is bound to compromise the position I wish to maintain.

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gives society an unusually high stake in sexuality as a literary subject, and although I have no great confidence in the ability of society, through the agency of the courts of law, to make the discrimination accurately, it seems to me natural that the effort at discrimination should be made, and appropriate that it should be made through the courts.

The purpose of my digression on censorship is simply to make plain the grounds for my saying that in the sense in which the courts use the word, it is not possible to call *Lolita* a pornographic book. It is, to be sure, the story of an erotic episode, and the story is told in such a way that erotic emotions and sensations are always before the reader. By my own definition of pornography, there is one scene to which the word can be applied —other readers may perhaps find more—but it is unlikely that any court, working under the standards of acceptation that have been established over the last few years, would apply the word in the legal sense even to that scene. And, indeed, *Lolita* takes very little of the wide latitude in the representation of sexual behaviour that is nowadays permitted to fiction, in point either of language or of explicitness of description.

That is what I mean when I say that if *Lolita* is, as I have called it, a shocking book, it is not for the reason that books are commonly thought to be shocking.

II

LOLITA is the story of the love of a man in his forties for a girl of twelve. The narrative is in the first person, the memoir or confession of the lover, written by him while awaiting trial for murder. Upon his sudden death before the trial begins, his manuscript is edited by John Ray, Jr., Ph.D., presumably a professor of psychology.

Humbert Humbert is the fictitious name under which the narrator presents himself. It is, as the "editor" remarks in his solemn preface, a bizarre name, and Humbert himself says that of the possible pseudonyms that had occurred to him, this one "expresses the nastiness best." It is in some way indicative of his nature that he takes a kind of pleasure in its being misheard and misremembered; he adopts the distortions and represents himself variously as Humbug, Humbird, Humburger, Hamburg, Homberg. He is, as the editor says, "a mixture of ferocity and jocularity that betrays supreme misery perhaps, but is not conducive to attractiveness." He is indeed anything but attractive. The jocularity can sometimes rise to wit, sometimes to wildness, but it can also sink to facetiousness and reach the brink of silliness. Humbert is a man without friends, and he desires none. His characteristic mode of thought is contemptuous and satirical, but we do not know what makes his standard of judgment, for it is never clear what, besides female beauty of a certain kind, has ever won his admiration. His ferocity takes the form of open brutality to women. He is the less attractive by reason of the style in which he chiefly writes about himself—whoever has tried to keep a journal and has been abashed at reading it by the apologetic, self-referring, self-exculpating whine of the prose, and by the very irony which is used to modify this deplorable tone, will recognise the manner of most of *Lolita*. Humbert himself recognises it and asks forgiveness for it—he is nothing if not self-conscious and he is as self-contemptuous as he is self-defensive.

By no means attractive, then. Yet he does not fail to effect an intimacy with us. His unrelenting self-reference, his impious greediness, seduce us into kinship with him. He is in every way a non-hero, an anti-hero; but his lack of all admirable qualities leaves perfectly clear—was no doubt devised to leave perfectly clear—the force of the obsessive passion of which he is capable.

Humbert is the son of a generally European (Swiss, French, Austrian, Danubian) father, who owned a luxury hotel on the Riviera, and of an English mother. His European birth and rearing are of considerable importance, for if the narrative is primarily the history of his love-affair with an American girl-child, it is incidentally the history of his love-affair with America. It is a relationship sufficiently ambivalent, charged with as much

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scorn and dislike as tenderness and affection, but perhaps for that reason the more interesting, and yielding a first-rate account of the life of the American road, of hotels and motels, of dead towns and flashy resorts, of skating-rinks and tourist caves, of Coke machines and juke boxes, of all that pertains to mobility and transience, to youth and uninvolvement.

By the time he has reached maturity H.H. (as he sometimes calls himself) has come to the realisation of the most important fact about his nature. Grown women repel him, not in the degree that he cannot have sexual relations with them, but in the degree that they can give him no pleasure. His sexual desire can be aroused and truly gratified only by girls between the ages of nine and fourteen.

THE social sanctions against the indulgence of this taste being of the most extreme sort, H.H. lives a deprived life. On several occasions he has had to take refuge in mental hospitals. He makes no great claims for his sanity, all he insists on is the madness of psychiatrists, and it is a chief dogma of his view of his erotic idiosyncrasy that no explanation of it can possibly be made. He tells us that his "very photogenic mother died in a freak accident (picnic, lightning)" when he was three, and nothing seems to him more absurd than the idea that his passional life might have been influenced by this event. It is probable that the author does not intend an irony here, that he quite agrees with Humbert in thinking the idea comical.

But Humbert does trace the strict condition imposed upon his love to a childhood episode, to his first passionate attachment, experienced as a boy one summer on the Riviera. The object of his passion, who reciprocated it, was a little girl named Annabel, who soon after died of typhus. Her name and her fate are significant, intended to recall the Annabel Lee of Poe's poem. The marriage of Poe to the fourteen-year-old Virginia Clemm is touched upon several times in the course of the story, and can, I think, be made to throw light on what the novel is up to.

The image of the lost Annabel fixes itself upon H.H.'s mind. To girls of her kind, having her beauty, charm, and sexual responsiveness, he gives the name *nymphets*. "Between the age limits of nine and fourteen there occur maidens who, to certain bewitched travellers, twice or many times older than they, reveal their true nature which is not human, but nymphic (that is, demoniac); and those chosen creatures I propose to designate as 'nymphets.'" [The accent should probably come on the first syllable, otherwise we get, as someone pointed out to me when I put it on the second, the heavy sound and eventually the ugly appearance of *nymphette*, which must inevitably suggest the very opposite of a nymphet, a drum-majorette.] The further description of the nymphet emphasises the demoniac quality—"the fey grace, the elusive, shifty, soul-shattering, insidious charm"—upon which the Greeks based their idea of the disease of nympholepsy and later peoples their conceptions of Undines, Belles Dames Sans Merci, and White Goddesses.

In middle age, in a New England town, Humbert discovers Dolores Haze, called Lolita, a middle-class schoolgirl of twelve, and conceives for her an irresistible desire. In order to be near Lolita and to make opportunity to possess her, Humbert marries her mother. It cannot be said that he exactly murders his new wife—it is only that, having read his diary in which he had set forth his reasons for marrying her and the details of his dislike of her, she runs distractedly out of the house and is providentially hit by a passing car. The way is now quite clear for the step-father. Believing that Lolita's innocence must not be offended, he has for some time made elaborate plans to drug the child, but in the end it is Lolita who ravishes Humbert; a month at a summer camp had served to induct her into the mysteries of sex, which to her are no mysteries at all, and she considers that H.H. is rather lacking in address.

The relation that is now established between Humbert and Lolita is of a double kind. His sexual obsession, so far from abating, grows by what it feeds on. Lolita

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accepts his sensuality with cool acquiescence, and even responds to it physically, but she is not moved by desire, and she is frequently bored and has to be bribed into compliance. Sensuality, however, does not comprise the whole of Humbert's feeling. He is *in loco parentis*—I have forgotten whether or not he makes a joke on this—and his emotions are in some part paternal. Lolita passes for his daughter, and his brooding concern for her, his jealousy of her interest in other males, his nervous desire to please or to placate her, do not constitute a mode of behaviour very different from that of any American father to his adolescent daughter. Nor is Lolita's response to Humbert very different from that which American girls of her age make to their fathers. She maintains towards him the common alternation of remote indifference and easy acceptance, and finds his restriction of her freedom a burden which is not much lightened by his indulgence.

Inevitably, of course, she undertakes to "get away," and inevitably she makes another man the instrument of an escape from a tyranny which for her is less that of a lover than of a father. All Humbert's jealous fantasies come true; Lolita takes up with a perverse middle-aged playwright—who is as much concerned to torture Humbert as to win Lolita—and after a period of very skilful deception, runs off with her lover. Her desertion of Humbert brings his life to an end and he exists only to dream of regaining her love and of destroying her seducer. After the passage of some years, he does at last find Lolita; she is married, not to the perverse lover but to a deaf and worthy young technician, by whom she is pregnant. At seventeen, her status as a nymphet has quite gone, yet for Humbert her charm is unabated, still absolute. It is so even though he observes "how womanish and somehow never seen that way before was the shadowy division between her pale breasts." He begs her to return to him. She refuses—it is to her a surprising idea that he loves her or had ever loved her: she is as unrecognising of his feeling for her as if she were indeed his daughter —and Humbert goes off to murder the playwright. We learn from the editor's preface that Lolita dies in childbed. Humbert dies of heart disease.

III

THIS, then, is the story of *Lolita* and it is indeed shocking. In a tone which is calculatedly not serious, it makes a prolonged assault on one of our unquestioned and unquestionably sexual prohibitions, the sexual inviolability of girls of a certain age (and compounds the impiousness with what amounts to incest).

It is all very well for us to remember that Juliet was fourteen when she was betrothed to Paris, and gave herself, with our full approval, to Romeo. It is all very well for us to find a wry idyllic charm in the story of the aged David and the little maid Abishag. And to gravely receive Dante's account of being struck to the heart by an eight-year-old Beatrice. And to say that distant cultures—H.H. gives a list of them to put his idiosyncracy in some moral perspective—and hot climates make a difference in ideas of the right age for female sexuality to begin. All very well for us to have long ago got over our first horror at what Freud told us about the sexuality of children; and to receive blandly what he has told us about the "family romance" and its part in the dynamics of the psyche. All very well for the family and society to take approving note of the little girl's developing sexual charms, to find a sweet comedy in her growing awareness of them and her learning to use them, and for her mother to be open and frank and delighted and ironic over the teacups about the clear signs of the explosive force of her sexual impulse. We have all become so nicely clear-eyed, so sensibly Coming-of-Age-in-Samoa. But let an adult male seriously think about the girl as a sexual object and all our sensibility is revolted.

The response is not reasoned but visceral. Within the range of possible heterosexual conduct, this is one of the few prohibitions which still seem to us to be confirmed by nature itself. Virginity once seemed so con-

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firmed, as did the marital fidelity of women, but they do so no longer. No novelist would expect us to respond with any moral intensity to his representing an unmarried girl having a sexual experience, whether in love or curiosity; the infidelity of a wife may perhaps be a little more interesting, but not much. The most serious response the novelist would expect from us is that we should "understand," which he would count on us to do automatically.

But our response to the situation that Mr. Nabokov presents to us is that of shock. And we find ourselves the more shocked when we realise that, in the course of reading the novel, we have come virtually to condone the violation it presents. Charles Dickens, by no means a naïve man, was once required to meet a young woman who had lived for some years with a man out of wedlock; he was dreadfully agitated at the prospect, and when he met the girl he was appalled to discover that he was not confronting a piece of depravity but a principled, attractive young person, virtually a lady. It was a terrible blow to the certitude of his moral feelings. That we may experience the same loss of certitude about the sexual behaviour that *Lolita* describes is perhaps suggested by the tone of my summary of the story—I was plainly not able to muster up the note of moral outrage. And it is likely that any reader of *Lolita* will discover that he comes to see the situation as less and less abstract and moral and horrible, and more and more as human and "understandable." Less and less, indeed, do we see a *situation*; what we become aware of is people. Humbert is perfectly willing to say that he is a monster; no doubt he is, but we find ourselves less and less eager to say so. Perhaps his depravity is the easier to accept when we learn that he deals with a Lolita who is not innocent, and who seems to have very few emotions to be violated; and I suppose we naturally incline to be lenient towards a rapist—legally and by intention H.H. is that—who eventually feels a deathless devotion to his victim!

But we have only to let the immediate influence of the book diminish a little with time, we have only to free ourselves from the rationalising effect of H.H.'s obsessive passion, we have only to move back into the real world where twelve-year-olds are being bored by Social Studies and plagued by orthodonture, to feel again the outrage at the violation of the sexual prohibition. And to feel this the more because we have been seduced into conniving in the violation, because we have permitted our fantasies to accept what we know to be revolting.

What, we must ask, is Mr. Nabokov's purpose in making this occasion for outrage?

I have indicated that his purpose cannot be explained by any interest in the "psychological" aspects of the story; he has none whatever. His novel is as far as possible from being a "study of" the emotions it presents. The malice which H.H. bears to psychiatry is quite Mr. Nabokov's own; for author, as for character, psychiatric concepts are merely occasions for naughty irreverence. Psychiatry and the world may join in giving scientific or ugly names to Humbert's sexual idiosyncrasy; the novel treats of it as a condition of love like another.

And we can be sure that Mr. Nabokov has not committed himself to moral subversion. He is not concerned to bring about a sexual revolution which will make paedophilia a rational and respectable form of heterosexuality. Humbert's "ferocity and jocularity," what we might call his moral facetiousness reaching the point of anarchic silliness, make the pervasive tone of the narrative, and that tone does have its curious influence upon us, as does the absoluteness of Humbert's passional obsession. Yet any anarchic power to which we may respond in the novel is quite negated when, near the end of the history, H.H. reflects, in a tone never used before, on the havoc he has made of Lolita's life.

It is of course possible that Mr. Nabokov wanted to shock us merely for shocking's sake, that he had in mind the intention of what might be called general satire, the purpose of which is to make us uneasy with ourselves, less sure of our moral simplicity than we have been: this he brings about by contriving the effect I have described, of leading

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us to become quite at ease with a sexual situation that should outrage us and then facing us with our facilely-given acquiescence.

And then of course Mr. Nabokov may be intending a more particular satire, upon the peculiar sexual hypocrisy of American life. I have in mind the perpetual publicity we give to sexuality, the unending invitation made by our popular art and advertising to sexual awareness, competence, and competition. To what end is a girl-child taught from her earliest years to consider the brightness and fragrance of her hair, and the shape of her body, and her look of readiness for adventure? Why, what other end than that she shall some day be a really capable air-line hostess? Or that she shall have the shining self-respect which, as we know, underlies all true virtue and efficiency? Or that her husband and her children shall not be ashamed of her, but, on the contrary, proud to claim her as their own? So say the headmistresses, the principals, the deans of women, the parents. But in every other culture that Mr. Nabokov is aware of, which is a good many, the arts of the boudoir were understood to point to the bed, and if they were taught early, they were understood to point to the bed early.

But I think that the real reason why Mr. Nabokov chose his outrageous subject matter is that he wanted to write a story about love.

IV

LOLITA is about love. Perhaps I shall be better understood if I put the statement in this form: *Lolita* is not about sex, but about love. Almost every page sets forth some explicit erotic emotion or some overt erotic action and still it is not about sex. It is about love.

This makes it unique in my experience of contemporary novels. If our fiction gives accurate testimony, love has disappeared from the western world, just as Denis de Rougemont said it should. The contemporary novel can tell us about sex, and about sexual communion, and about mutuality, and about the strong fine relationships that grow up between men and women; and it can tell us about marriage. But about love, which was once one of its chief preoccupations, it can tell us nothing at all.

My having mentioned Denis de Rougemont and his curious, belated, supererogatory onslaught on love will indicate that I have in mind what I seem to remember he calls passion-love, a kind of love with which European literature has dealt since time immemorial but with especial intensity since the Arthurian romances and the code of courtly love. Passion-love was a mode of feeling not available to everyone—the authorities on the subject restricted it to the aristocracy—but it was always of the greatest interest to almost everyone who was at all interested in the feelings, and it had a continuing influence on other kinds of love and on the literary conventions through which love was represented.

The essential condition of this kind of love was that it had nothing to do with marriage and could not possibly exist in marriage. Alanus Capellanus in his manual on courtly love set it down as perfectly obvious doctrine that a husband and wife cannot be lovers. The reason was that theirs was a practical and contractual relationship, having reference to estates and progeny. It was not a relation of the heart and the inclination, and the situation of the lady made it impossible for her to give herself in free-will because it was expected that she give herself in obedience. That the possibility of love could exist only apart from and more or less in opposition to marriage has been, by and large, the traditional supposition of the European upper classes, which have placed most of their expectations of erotic pleasure outside of marriage.

It was surely one of the most interesting and important of cultural revisions when the middle classes, which had been quite specifically excluded from the pleasure and dignity of love (one cannot be both busy and a lover), began to appropriate the prestige of this mode of feeling and to change it in the process of adopting it. For they assimilated it to marriage itself, and required of married love that it have the high brilliance and significance

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of passion-love. Something of that expectation still persists—it is still the love-poetry and the love-music and the love-dramas of passion-love in its later forms that shape our notions of what the erotic experience can be in intensity, in variety, in grace.

But inevitably the sexual revolution of our time brought the relationship between marriage and passion-love to a virtual end. Perhaps all that the two now have in common is the belief that the lovers must freely choose each other and that their choice has the highest sanctions and must not be interfered with. Apart from this, every aspect of the new relationship is a denial of the old ideal of love. If one can rely on the evidence of fiction to discover the modern idea of the right relation between a man and a woman, it would probably begin with a sexual meeting, more or less tentative or experimental, and go on to sexual communion, after which marriage would take place. There would follow a period in which husband and wife would each make an effort to get rid of their *merely symbolic* feelings for the other *partner* in the marriage and to learn to see each other *without illusion* and as they are *in reality*. To do this is the sign of *maturity*. It enables husband and wife to *build a life together*. In the *mutuality* and *warmth* of their *togetherness* their children are included. Towards each other, as towards their children, they show *tolerance* and *understanding*, which they find it easier to do if they have a *good sexual relationship*.

The condition towards which such a marriage aspires is *health*—a marriage is praised by being called a *healthy* marriage. This will suggest how far the modern ideal of love is from passion-love. The literal meaning of the word *passion* will indicate the distance. Nowadays we use the word chiefly to mean an intense feeling, forgetting the old distinction between a passion and an emotion, the former being an emotion before which we are helpless, which we have to *suffer*, in whose grip we are *passive*. The passion-lover was a sick man, a *patient*. It was the convention for him to say that he was sick and to make a show of his physical and mental derangement. And indeed by any modern standard of emotional health what he was expected to display in the way of obsessional conduct and masochism would make his condition deserve some sort of pretty grave name. His passion filled his whole mind to the exclusion of everything else; he submitted himself to his *mistress* as her *servant*, even her *slave*, he gloried in her *power* over him and expected that she would make him suffer, that she would be *cruel*.

Obviously I am dealing with a convention of literature, not describing the actual relationship between men and women. But it was a convention of a peculiar explicitness and force and it exerted an influence upon the management of the emotions down through the 19th century. At that time, it may be observed, the creative genius took over some of the characteristics of the lover: his obsessiveness, his masochism, his noble subservience to an ideal, and his antagonism to the social conventions, his propensity for making a scandal.

For scandal was of the essence of passion-love, which not only inverted the marital relationship of men and women but subverted marriage itself. It could also subvert a man's social responsibility, his honour. In either case, a scandal resulted, the extent of which measured the force of the love. Typically it led to disaster for the lovers, to death. For one aspect of the pathology of love was that it made of no account certain established judgments, denying the reality and the good of much in the world that is indeed real and good. In this respect lovers were conceived of much as we conceive of the artist—that is, as captivated by a reality and a good that are not of the ordinary world.

Now it may well be that all this is absurd, and really and truly a kind of pathology, and that we are much the better for being quite done with it, and that our contemporary love-ideal of a firm, tolerant, humorous, wry, happy marriage is a great advance from it. The world seems to be agreed that this is so—the evidence is to be found in a wide range of testimony from the most

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elementary fiction and the simplest handbook of marriage up to psychoanalysis and the works of D. H. Lawrence, for whom "love" was anathema. But the old ideal, as I have said, still has its charm for us—we still understand it in some degree; it still speaks to us of an intensity and grace of erotic emotion and behaviour that we do not want to admit is entirely beyond our reach.

If a novelist wanted, for whatever strange reason, to write a novel about the old kind of love, how would he go about it? How would he find or contrive the elements that make love possible?

For example, if love requires scandal, what could the novelist count on to constitute a scandal? Surely not—as I have already suggested—adultery. The very word is archaic; we recognise the possibility of its use only in law or in the past. Marital infidelity is not thought of as necessarily destructive of marriage, and, indeed, the word *unfaithful*, which once had so terrible a charge of meaning, begins to sound quaint, seeming to be inappropriate to our modern code. A few years ago William Barrett asked, *à propos* the effect of *Othello* on a modern audience, whether anyone nowadays could really comprehend and be interested in the spectacle of Othello's jealousy. I think that both comprehension and interest are possible. There are more than enough of the old feelings still left —nothing is ever thrown out of the attic of the mind—to permit us to understand perfectly well what Othello feels. Here we must be aware of the difference between life and literature. It is of course not true that people do not feel sexual jealousy; it is still one of the most intense of emotions. But they find it ever harder to believe that they are justified in feeling it, that they do right to give this emotion any authority. A contemporary writer would not be able to interest us in a situation like Othello's because, even if he had proof in his own experience of the actuality of jealousy, he could not give intellectual credence, or expect his readers to give it, to an emotion which in Shakespeare was visceral, questionable, of absolute authority.

But the breaking of the taboo about the sexual unavailability of very young girls has for us something of the force that a wife's infidelity had for Shakespeare. H.H.'s relation with Lolita defies society as scandalously as did Tristan's relation with Iseult, or Vronsky's with Anna. It puts the lovers, as lovers in literature must be put, beyond the pale of society.

Then the novelist, if he is to maintain the right conditions for a story of passion-love, must see to it that his lovers do not approach the condition of marriage. That is, their behaviour to each other must not be touched by practicality, their virtues must not be of a kind that acknowledges the claims of the world. As soon as mutuality comes in, and common interests, and co-operation, and tolerance, and a concern for each other's welfare or prestige in the world, the ethos of the family, of marriage, has asserted itself and they lose their status of lovers. Their behaviour to each other must be precisely not what we call "mature"—they must see each other and the world with the imperious absolutism of children. So that a man in the grip of an obsessional lust and a girl of twelve make the ideal couple for a story about love written in our time. At least at the beginning of his love for Lolita there are no practical moral considerations, no practical personal considerations, that qualify H.H.'s behaviour. As for Lolita, there is no possibility of her bringing the relation close to the condition of marriage because she cannot even imagine the female rôle in marriage. She remains perpetually the cruel mistress; even after her lover has won physical possession of her, she withholds the favour of her feeling, for she has none to give, by reason of her age, possibly by reason of her temperament.

Then the novelist must pay due attention to making the lover's obsession believable and not ridiculous. Nowadays we find it difficult to give credence to the idea that a man might feel that his reason and his very life depended on the response to him of a particular woman. Recently I read *Liber Amoris* with some graduate students and found that they had no understanding whatever of Hazlitt's obsessive commitment to Sarah Walker. They could

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see no reason why a man could not break the chains of a passion so unrewarding, so humiliating. I later regretted having been cross at their stupidity when I found myself doubting the verisimilitude of Proust's account of the relation of Swann to Odette. But our doubts are allayed if the obsession can be accounted for by the known fact of a sexual peculiarity, an avowed aberration. Pathology naturalises the strange particularity of the lover's preference.

I MAY seem to have been talking about *Lolita* as if in writing it Mr. Nabokov had undertaken a job of emotional archæology. This may not be quite fair to Mr. Nabokov's whole intention, but it does suggest how regressive a book *Lolita* is, how, although it strikes all the most approved modern postures and attitudes, it is concerned to restore a foredone mode of feeling. And in nothing is *Lolita* so archaic as in its way of imaging the beloved. We with our modern latitude in these matters are likely to be amused by the minor details of his mistress's person that caught the lover's fancy in the novels of the 19th century—the expressiveness of the eyes, a certain kind of glance, a foot, an ankle, a wrist, an ear, a ringlet; with our modern reader's knowledge of the size and shape of the heroine's breasts, thighs, belly, and buttocks, these seem trifling and beside the point. Yet the interest in the not immediately erotic details of the female person was not forced on the lover or the novelist by narrow conventions; rather, it was an aspect of the fetishism which seems to attend passion-love, a sort of synecdote of desire, in which the part stands for the whole, and even the glove or the scarf of the beloved has an erotic value. This is the mode of H.H.'s adoration of Lolita, and against the background of his sexual greed, which he calls "ape-like," it comes over us as another reason for being shocked, that in recent fiction no lover has thought of his beloved with so much tenderness, that no woman has been so charmingly evoked, in such grace and delicacy, as Lolita; the description of her tennis game, in which even her racket has an erotic charm, is one of the few examples of rapture in modern writing.

It seems to me that it is impossible to miss the *parti pris* in Mr. Nabokov's archæological undertaking, the impulse to mock and discredit all forms of progressive rationalism not only because they are stupid in themselves but because they have brought the madness of love to an end. But Mr. Nabokov is not partisan to the point of being dishonest about the true nature of love. It is H.H., that mixture of ferocity and jocularity, who reminds us that "Love seeketh only self to please. . . . And builds a Hell in Heaven's despite." The passages in which Humbert gives voice to this judgment are not as well done as one might wish; they stand in an awkward relation to the tone and device of the book. Yet perhaps for that very reason they are the more startling and impressive (if we do not read them in a mood which makes them seem to verge upon the maudlin).

And in the end H.H. succumbs, and happily, to the dialectic of the history of love. I have represented passion-love as being the antithesis of marriage and as coming to an end when the conditions characteristic of marriage impose themselves, by whatever means, upon the lovers. Yet it is always to marriage that passion-love aspires, unique marriage, ideal marriage, marriage available to no other pair, but marriage nonetheless, with all the cramping vows and habitualness of marriage. And it is just this that H.H. eventually desires. Mr. Nabokov is, among his other accomplishments, an eminent entomologist and I shall leave it to some really rigorous close-reader of fiction to tell us what an entomological novelist wants us to do with the fact that *nymph* is the name for the young of an insect without complete metamorphosis. Probably nothing. But he is also a scholar of languages and he knows that *nymph* is the Greek word for *bride*. He does not impart this information to us, yet he is at pains, as I have remarked, to put us in mind of the rapturous, tortured marriage of Poe and Virginia, and one of his last meditations on Lolita is of the constancy she evokes from

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him despite the ravages of time having destroyed the old incitements to lust:

> ... There she was with her ruined looks and her adult, rope-veined narrow hands and her goose-flesh white arms, and her shallow ears, and her unkempt armpits, there she was (my Lolita!), hopelessly worn at seventeen, with that baby, dreaming already in her of becoming a big shot and retiring around 2020 A.D.—and I looked and looked at her, and knew as clearly as I know I am to die, that I loved her more than anything I had ever seen or imagined on earth, or hoped for anywhere else. She was only the faint violet whiff and dead leaf echo of the nymphet I had rolled myself upon with such cries in the past; an echo on the brink of a russet ravine, with a far wood under a white sky, and brown leaves choking the brook and one last cricket in the crisp weeds... but thank God it was not that echo alone that I worshipped. What I used to pamper among the tangled vines of my heart, *mon grand péché radieux,* had dwindled in its essence: sterile and selfish vice, all that I cancelled and cursed. You may jeer at me, and threaten to clear the court, but until I am gagged and half-throttled, I will shout my poor truth. I insist the world know how much I loved my Lolita, *this* Lolita, pale and polluted, and big with another's child, but still grey-eyed, still sooty-lashed, still auburn and almond....

I am not sure just how I respond to the moral implication of this passage—I am not sure that with it, as with other passages in which H.H. speaks of the depth and wild solemnity of his love and remorse, Mr. Nabokov has not laid an emotional trap for the reader, that perhaps H.H.'s last intensities ought not to be received with considerably more irony than at first they call for. I don't say this with the least certitude. It may be that Mr. Nabokov really wants us to believe with entire seriousness that we are witnessing the culmination of H.H.'s moral evolution. Perhaps he even wants us to believe that his ascent from "ape-like" lust to a love which challenges the devils below and the angels up over the sea to ever dissever his soul from the soul of the lovely Annabel Lee constitutes the life-cycle of the erotic instinct. I can, I think, manage to take seriously a tragic Humbert, but I find myself easier with Humbert the anti-hero, with Humbert as cousin-german to Rameau's nephew.

I don't want to put my uneasiness with the tragic Humbert as an objection. Indeed, for me one of the attractions of *Lolita* is its ambiguity of tone—which is pretty well exemplified in the passage I have quoted—and its ambiguity of intention, its ability to arouse uneasiness, to throw the reader off balance, to require him to change his stance and shift his position and move on. *Lolita* gives us no chance to settle and sink roots. Perhaps it is the curious moral mobility it urges on us that accounts for its remarkable ability to represent certain aspects of American life.

Vernon Scannell

Two Appearances

The lean ecstatic man, the starry poet,
Expecting any day the total vision
And generously preparing to bestow it
On all of us, despite some mild derision
From that minority who doubtless find
His meditative beauty not their kind,
Walks whitely like a batsman to his crease;
While in the dirty night the ugly fellow,
His barrel belly resting on his thighs,
Calls out the temptress with a soundless bellow
And fixes her with angry bloodshot eyes,
Then forces her to bear a masterpiece.

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Gerd Ruge

Conversations in Moscow

I. Vladimir Dudintsev

HALF AN HOUR after we had taken leave of each other, I could no longer remember what Vladimir Dudintsev really looked like. I knew that he had been wearing fairly heavy shoes, and a suit that looked, even for Moscow, provincial; but not even its colour remained with me. "Poor but clean," was the phrase that went through my mind. He was wearing spectacles with plastic rims and round lenses, but I could no longer recall what the eyes behind them were like. His face was almost expressionless and unhealthily red, his speech flat and lacking in resonance, his movements clumsy and awkward. "You'll be disappointed in Dudintsev," my Russian friends had said. "People expect to find a hothead, a young rebel, and then they find someone who looks like a bookkeeper." But he was not that either. I may have failed to get a good picture of Dudintsev because I met him in surroundings so alien to both of us. We sat in the reception room of the State Committee for Foreign Cultural Relations, in a corner of the large empty hall where the splendid furnishings might have been copied from a high-society novel of the turn of the century. It was cool in the room, which had a slightly musty air and the intimacy of a railway waiting-room. I don't know how the place had been chosen; perhaps by the committee which had arranged the interview; perhaps Dudintsev, who it appears has a very cramped apartment, had himself asked for a neutral place of this kind to meet me. In any case, this was the background against which I saw the author of *Not by Bread Alone*. He seemed to be withdrawn into himself. No doubt he is not by nature a striking man, but sometimes, in conversation with him, it seemed to me that at least in part this elected simplicity was a pose, something that he wore not without a certain arrogance.

Personal questions Dudintsev avoided, but he spoke the more willingly of himself as a writer. If what he said told me little about Dudintsev the man, it did enable me to correct many opinions about the author of the novel *Not by Bread Alone*—opinions which I had heard expressed by Soviet acquaintances and had in my turn adopted. I no longer believe that Dudintsev's book was a sort of lucky hit, the work of an average Soviet writer who was anxious to write a critical novel in the fashion then thought desirable and who had no idea of the import of his work. Dudintsev himself made no attempt to plead a misunderstanding. And what he said about his life, and his views on life, was enough to justify some conclusions.

"I began to write when I was thirteen, but even before that I was in love with writers. By the age of thirteen I was old enough to be capable of infidelity towards them. It's the same in literature as in love: you discover a writer, you make yourself quite sick about him, then it passes and you find other writers. At first I was more attracted by the form than the content. For a long time I was under Isaac Babel's influence, then came Proust, and then poetry—particularly Pasternak's poems. I fell for Anatole France twice, once as a boy, and again at a riper age. And then came Hemingway—that sickness has left its traces

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behind; but now I'm cured—even if the scars remain, they don't ache any more. Well, let's say I'm 90 per cent cured. At that time, round about 1935, I was attracted by the form of his short stories. Hemingway himself cured me. I read *Farewell to Arms*; that was a step forward. Hemingway had cast off the externals of a fascinating style, and showed a deeper feeling for people. We also read a good deal of Dos Passos. My feelings for Russian literature were at that time pretty cool. I would argue with my future wife and prove to her that Leo Tolstoy had become outmoded and was quite uninteresting for people of our time. Dostoevsky I could not read; he always caused me great pain. To-day—perhaps I should add this as a sort of footnote—to-day I look back on the Dudintsev of that time and I realise that Dostoevsky did not write for the young and the inexperienced. In them he provokes a trauma. A mature man, on the other hand, is aware not of the pathological aspect which haunted him in his youth, but of the lofty humanity, the suffering underlying the passion.

"When I was young I did not understand the characteristic feature of Russian literature. Now I am thirty-nine. I would not care to say that it is the greatest of all literatures, but as I grew older I began to understand it, to grasp its essential character. I always used to wonder why we had so many revolts, so many peculiar forms of the revolutionary movement. In painting, too, you find very little interest in landscapes and interiors; our painters are interested in people, in their joys and their sorrows. The habit of pondering his fate is something that you can't take away from a Russian; and this most important trait has shaped all our artists. They carried in their souls a burning desire to help people. They sought ways of helping. When there is such a powerful will behind the pen, form becomes subservient to content. When the hand holding the pen is not strong or loving enough, the form grows rebellious: it takes on a life of its own and tries to abolish the significance of the content. It was from this rebellion of form that abstract art was born. But if a writer tries to understand people and to help them, his hand becomes so strong that form submits to it and lovingly serves his aim. That is what is peculiar to Russian literature. I don't mean by that to put it in a category by itself. But it is a peculiarity which became apparent to me when I grew up. It was also the reason why I rushed at it with such enthusiasm."

VLADIMIR Dudintsev comes of an educated family interested in the arts. His father, a surveying engineer, wanted to be a singer, and studied singing in his spare time; his mother was an opera singer and pianist. One uncle, who repaired surveying instruments, played the violin. At the family concerts young Vladimir was only a listener; his talent lay in another direction. "I wrote my first poem when I was six. My father gave me a present and made a little speech as he presented the prize. The prize stimulated me to write more poems, but my father didn't give me any more prizes; but by that time I'd got into the habit of writing. I made poems as other people smoke. I didn't get any real pleasure out of it, but it had a peculiar attraction for me." His teachers and schoolfellows admired Vladimir's gift and one evening, when there was some celebration at the school, he was discovered by a correspondent of *Pionerskaya Pravda*, who invited him to come to the editorial offices of this Party newspaper for schoolchildren. "I opened the door, and there were about twenty children sitting in the room. They didn't strike me as geniuses, and they weren't either. But all of them wrote better than I did. The idea was to recruit me, to draw me in, to convert me. And ever since then I've been the subject of fierce criticism and the object of many blows. I've grown a skin like a crocodile. Six days a week I'm insulted, and on the seventh I'm praised—perhaps."

In 1931 Dudintsev had his first poem published. Others followed, and stories in newspapers and magazines, and while still a boy he won third prize in a competition open to adults. The first prize was not awarded, and a well-known writer received the second. "That gave me a pretty high opinion of my-

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self," Dudintsev said. "That prize, like my father's, condemned me to literature. I was sixteen years old at the time. I had to take part in evening readings with adults, and I had a grown-up suit. I visited Leningrad once and was put up in a splendid hotel room. When the porter asked me my occupation, I answered 'Writer.' I learnt to drink with other writers, and, as you know, we use big glasses in Russia. It all made a great impression on me."

Despite these literary seductions, Dudintsev did not attend the Gorki Literary Institute. He went to the University Institute of Law; he was discontented with himself, and felt that a purely literary education could not give him that knowledge of the world and of people which he lacked. Even then, of course, he went on writing, mostly stories which today he describes as weak. Then came the war. Dudintsev served in the infantry, rose to the rank of company commander, and was severely wounded. When he was released from hospital he was assigned, because of his training, to a military court. "I had shot my man and begot my man," he said, quoting Kipling. Both events belonged to the opening phase of a new period in his life. Throughout the war he had done no writing at all.

"But when the war was over, all my old literary sins rose up and overpowered me. So long as I was in the middle of it all, I could forget that I was a writer. But after that it was like the temptation of St. Anthony. Literary images appeared before me like beautiful women. I wrote a story. It was called "Encounter with a Birch," and I got a prize in a competition run by *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, the Young Communist League paper."

DUDINTSEV moved to Moscow, made friends, and enjoyed a brief spell of success. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* engaged him as a roving reporter. He wrote commissioned articles—"What the paper wanted"—and found time to write a few stories as well. But the settled career of a literary functionary was not the last stage in the development of this prodigy. Dudintsev described what succeeded it in these words:

"After I wrote 'Encounter with a Birch,' I began to change. I immersed myself in the Russian tradition, about which I've already spoken to you. The relations I observed between people seemed to me positive or negative. The voice of the Russian tradition rang in my ears. I could no longer write on order—I had been asked to do something for the New Year number. I suddenly saw relations between people which I, a mere observer, was bound to admire, and I felt the urge to portray them as an example. Or I observed relations which I had to condemn, New Year commission or no. I had to do it, so that people could get a standard which would help them to recognise what was evil, encourage in their souls a spirit of irreconcilability towards the face of evil and a love for truth. About that time another story of mine won a prize, 'Hands of Friendship.' So I'd caught a big fish three times, and that reinforced my desire to devote myself to literature."

He had begun on the preliminary work for *Not by Bread Alone* at that time. In 1950 he started making notes, putting down his ideas, and incidents he had witnessed. By 1955 he was ready to start on the actual writing of the novel. When the book appeared in 1956 it was at first well received in Moscow. Gradually, however—no doubt as a result of the reception given to the book by younger Soviet readers and readers abroad—hostile voices began to be heard, and finally Khrushchev himself condemned the book.

At present, Dudintsev went on, he is collecting material for a long novel, but he refused to say anything about its theme. The characters in the new book live in Moscow and he was spending his time interviewing them, studying them, getting to know them better. He spent his evenings with them round the samovar. It seems to be true that, as the Moscow evening paper said in a short paragraph—the only Soviet paper to mention it—Dudintsev is writing a book about the life of the Moscow intelligentsia. Whether in fact it will be the "positive" book which,

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according to the *Vechernaya Moskva*, will disappoint all those people who used Dudintsev's earlier novel as material for criticising the Soviet system, remains to be seen. I asked Dudintsev whether he was now writing for the newspapers, before actually beginning on his novel. He said he was not. Did the newspapers or periodicals ask him to write for them, or weren't they interested in his work? Dudintsev avoided answering. Did he have money? "I'm certainly not rich. I'm in the state when I work best. I don't pine for a full purse." I kept up my questioning. Would the money he had received for his last novel last him until the next one was out? "Far from it. That money was finished long ago. The novel was eaten up before the harvest was reaped. I began to sell the grain as soon as I'd started ploughing. When I sowed, half had already been sold, and when I reaped, I ate the last piece of bread and began to consider how I could sell the next year's harvest."

In other words, Vladimir Dudintsev was running into debt while he was writing *Not by Bread Alone*, and he is again living on credit. Probably his wife has her own job and contributes to the family earnings, as is customary in the Soviet Union. But Dudintsev showed no inclination to say anything more about his private affairs. There was a pause in the talk. Then he said, without any prompting:

"By thought you never penetrate to the depths of feeling. Rational thinking is inadequate; you have to begin with the ethos, the way Kant did. Contemplation of the starry heaven above us, the recognition of the moral law within us, superior to all speculative thought.... That doesn't mean that I agree fully with his theories. There are, of course, other doctrines...."

II. Ilya Ehrenberg

THE visitor, admitted by an elderly servant, notices a battered black beret on a hook, and a poster by Picasso on the living-room door opposite. Although the front door of this flat on the seventh floor of the house at 8 Gorki Street had no name-plate, there is no question but that this is, in fact, Ilya Ehrenburg's flat. There are not many flats in Moscow where a beret would be likely to hang across from a Picasso poster.

Ilya Ehrenburg was still engaged in a conference in his study. Meanwhile I waited in the living-room, at a table covered with a thin, greyish-white oilcloth. The setting was curiously compounded of the Russian taste in living-room decoration and the modern fashions of Paris. This may represent a compromise between Ehrenburg and his wife, or one between a man of cosmopolitan tastes and his Soviet environment. On the one hand there were sombre, old-fashioned pieces of furniture, semi-modern curtains in the style of the 'twenties, a fringed lamp, cactus, and various kinds of china dogs. On the other, there were wonderful Picasso ceramics, and the walls were practically covered by lithographs and oil paintings by Picasso, Braque, and Léger.

Summoned by the servant, I walked once more past Picasso's poster (of the Paris Congress of the Partisans of Peace), and along the dark corridor to the study. Ehrenburg was sitting at his desk. The study contained a great many bookshelves, but only a few small paintings, obviously chosen with care. Two of them looked like Marquet, and another was a picture of a Paris street painted by a Russian Post-Impressionist—perhaps these were Ehrenburg's favourites. There was only one Picasso, the portrait of Ehrenburg that Picasso used in one of the peace posters.

I do not know what Ilya Ehrenburg looks like in his rôle as a Partisan of Peace, and Picasso's portrait is almost ten years old. The young man with a thin face, whose eyes seemed to sparkle with a cold fire, appeared to be only remotely related to the man at the desk—an elderly gentleman dressed in a well-cut light blue suit with a small pattern and matching striped tie, with a shock of nearly white hair and slight bags under his eyes; the face, one might say, of an artist who is something of a man of the world.

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When I was sitting opposite Ilya Ehrenburg, the organ of the Soviet Writers' Union, the *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, had not yet published the sharp attack in which an almost unknown young critic accused the doyen of Soviet literature of the gravest faults that can be committed at the moment in the Communist Party and in the cultural life of the Soviet Union. These were complaints which up till then had been reserved for the critical and rebellious young writers of Poland and Hungary. Not that Ehrenburg had not previously been in trouble; he had already been criticised because of the same writings which later provoked this virtually official indictment. But he had not been intimidated by this criticism. He continued quite publicly to make heretical statements and appeared to feel quite secure in the light of the fact that he had again been given a seat in the Supreme Soviet, a position of honour that would not be accorded to someone who had been deposed. He gave me a thoroughly optimistic impression, and even the subsequent attack in the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* has not convinced me that this optimism was entirely unjustified.

But one does not raise difficult questions like this at the beginning of a conversation. We talked at first, therefore, about Western literature, a neutral subject. Ehrenburg thought that nothing much was being done in the West at the moment. The French? Well, yes, Camus, perhaps, but too "cerebral," written too much in the brain, like all French literature. The Americans had much to offer and had achieved a great deal; "but Hemingway, for example—that, after all, is my own generation." His friends told him that West German literature was the most interesting in Europe, but he did not know German and had not read any of it. But then he continued by saying (could it have been a misunderstanding on my part?) that he knew only the East German writers. Brecht was a great poet, more of a poet than a dramatist. Anna Seghers was interesting; her best book, and too little known, was probably *Transit*. Like all her books this one was well constructed, but it was excellent in its psychological development as well. And man's inner life, Ehrenburg thought, ought to be a writer's principal interest. For this reason he liked Chekhov more than Dostoevsky, whose characters were only ideas dressed up as people; "and ideas I have myself, I get them elsewhere."

SLOWLY we moved up to the present. Ehrenburg proposed a theory about the three phases of Soviet literature. After the revolution the reading public was, to begin with, the same as before 1917, so that literature was written for intellectuals. Then an effort was made in the 'thirties at a broader approach, a conscious levelling and simplification of literature designed to attract new readers. Finally, since the war, it had become possible to probe more deeply again. "To-day the readers are more interesting than the books with which they are supplied," Ehrenburg said.

He told me of the enormous thirst for reading matter in the countryside where there were no other attractions. The Soviet Union, he said, could not be judged from Moscow alone. "As deputy to the Supreme Soviet from Dünaburg, in Lithuania, I occasionally have to appear before my constituents, and I have to answer questions not only about domestic and foreign policy but also about literature, which no German or French deputy probably has to do. Also there are interesting and instructive readers' conferences, with open and spontaneous discussions. There is to-day a widespread interest in literature, not confined to an élite. French writers tell me sometimes that they have had a letter from a reader, who is immediately turned into a literary person. I get a great many letters—letters from quite simple people with very serious questions."

I asked whether readers found Soviet literature satisfying, whether they were content with the schematic conflicts of socialist realism. Ehrenburg repeated that readers nowadays were more interesting than the characters in their books. Then he enumerated a few post-war novels, and he said that Soviet war stories, particularly, were some-

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times better than those of the West. "Take Nekrasov, or Kazakevich. They have written honest, straightforward books, and there are quite a lot of good novels. Soviet poetry, though, is very rich, even better than prose writing. Leonid Martynov, for example, is a very interesting poet, and there are others. Of course, we also have a lot of mediocre *poètes d'occasion*, but that is due to the great demand."

The works of the authors whom Ehrenburg named have been sharply criticised in official quarters. Some of these authors participated in the "conspiracy of silence," *i.e.*, they were among those who refused to retract. I asked whether they could still be read and discussed, but Ehrenburg did not give a direct answer.

"You see," Ehrenburg said, "there is so much in our country that you don't know about. A book about Picasso has just appeared. I doubt if you have seen it. A friend of mine wanted to buy three copies of it. Impossible—there is much too much demand to sell any one buyer three copies." He showed me the little blue volume. It consisted of interviews with Picasso by Western critics; there is also one piece by a Pole, mixed in with Kahnweiler's reminiscences. At the end there was a representative selection of black-and-white reproductions. It was a book that must have been dynamite in Soviet discussions on art.

"An acquaintance of mine, the director of a steel tubes factory, came to me with a request. He wanted to subscribe to the complete edition of the works of Tagore, thirty volumes. This was not possible. Then he asked me—I have certain privileges as a member of the Writers' Union—to order the books for him. Having no interest in and no room for the complete edition, I agreed. The director explained that Tagore was his favourite writer. You can see that there is a great variety of tastes. In the Botanical Gardens here we have a scientist who is in charge of orchids. She considers orchids as one of the essentials of life, and you cannot talk to her about roses. Nevertheless, she is a good Soviet citizen."

I REMARKED that not all the flowers of literature were equally well cultivated, and I asked about Boris Pasternak, whose poems have scarcely been printed in the Soviet Union for twenty-five years, and whose novel *Doctor Zhivago* was not allowed to appear in Moscow. Ehrenburg's answer was certainly characteristic of him. He was concerned to show that he knew the story and that he was a connoisseur who did not allow others to prescribe his taste for him; but he also knew how far he could go without committing himself. All this was contained in his answer: "Boris Pasternak is a great writer and a very egocentric person. He can, without affectation, write about entirely private associations, about quite recent events which nobody else may know about except a woman and assume that everyone knows all about them too." And Ehrenburg told a rather malicious anecdote about Pasternak in Paris, where he declined an invitation to dinner with some famous French writers because it was not his time for dinner and because he did not like watching other people eating.

"He is the most egocentric person I know," Ehrenburg continued, "but not unpleasantly so, just like a child, and certainly it does not detract from his qualities as a writer. He is one of the greatest living poets in the world. Even his prose is always poetic, always not quite on the ground, but it is always great prose, full of poetic images. I have read *Doctor Zhivago*, and the description of those days is excellent. Pasternak and I belong to the same generation, so I can pass judgment on this."

Seeing my surprise at this wholly positive appraisal, Ehrenburg recapitulated what he had said—but added: "As I said, I have read the novel, in manuscript. To be sure, I have not yet finished it, I have just got to the period of the revolution. Up to that time, I repeat, the description is excellent." And in this repetition of his praise Ehrenburg included the important observations with which he covered himself.

We went on to discuss the books that had been placed on the Index by criticism from

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official quarters. I mentioned Dudintsev's novel *Not by Bread Alone*, its tremendous, inexplicable success in the West and the discussion, equally inexplicable in literary terms, that it provoked amonger the younger generation of Soviet readers.

Dudintsev's book was too weak, Ehrenburg thought, to be important. The negative characters were well outlined, they were true to life, but the character of Lopatkin was contrived and lifeless; likewise the love story. "Russian literature will leave Dudintsev by the wayside. His fame is a product of the cold war, which flared up again just at that time. Granin's *The Inventor*, where Dudintsev's criticism can also be found, had appeared two years earlier; but the time was not ripe then. Dudintsev's fame is bound up with the cold war as regards not only the foreign but also the domestic reaction. The satirical part of the book is good. Only the character of Drozdov is well drawn. Compare the work to Nekrasov's *The Homecoming* or Vera Panova's work. There the positive and negative characters are drawn with the same pen. They are, in this sense, also negative books, but they have literary quality. It is all right to describe the negative sides of life, but you have to be able to write well enough."

I REMARKED that even these works had been criticised so sharply that their authors had disappeared from the Soviet literary scene. "What the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* writes," Ehrenburg replied, "is not necessarily the last word. When you came to see me you probably expected to meet a corpse. As you see, I am alive. What the officials say or do is not necessarily the most important question. Life has many sides. Of course, socialism must be constructed, but the house of socialism has many mansions. Some people build hotels like the Ukraine or the Leningrad [skyscrapers with lots of ornate decoration], and they built them with the best of intentions because they believe that this is the sort of house that socialism needs. I am of a different opinion and I think they are dreadful. But it has to be recognised that there are varieties of temperament and taste. The superficial impression that many foreigners take away with them is deceptive. Some of them depict our country as a hell, others as a paradise. Both descriptions are flat, without depth or relief. But, as Boris Pasternak says in one of his poems: *'The god of love is the god of detail.'* That applies not only to women but to much else besides."

I enquired about the "thaw," that period of relaxation from which Ehrenburg took the name of his novel. Was the thaw over, was it freezing up again? "The development of a country," Ehrenburg replied, "should not be judged by everyday events. Is the thaw over? Well, one day it is colder, the next day it is warmer, and development goes on. Literature is not the province of officials and of the Writers' Union alone."

I had mentioned in the course of the conversation what Alexei Surkov, the secretary of the Writers' Union, had said about Ehrenburg. He had numbered him among the "suicides" of "socialist realism" who write paradoxical rubbish. This remark of Surkov, who as secretary of the Union and member of the Central Committee of the Party is one of the most important levers of Communist literary policy, derived partly from a mutual dislike between Ehrenburg and Surkov, as I discovered later. But the secretary of the Writers' Union was referring to the much-criticised essays on French literature in which Ehrenburg launched an indirect attack on the principles of socialist realism. Ehrenburg was annoyed but not disturbed by Surkov's remark. He shrugged his shoulders and said: "Do I look like a suicide? My essay on Stendhal is to appear in a collected volume on French literature. I am also working on essays on Japanese, Greek, and Indian art. I am interested in the cultures of the meeting points between the Orient and the Occident, in their similarities." And he showed me a small terra-cotta head from India whose classic features did seem to point towards Greece. He told me about his travels to Japan, and India, about his impressions and ideas. Then the telephone rang, and I got a glimpse of literary life in practice.

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EHRENBURG took off the receiver and identified himself. A robust young voice came confidently over the wire, so that I could hear almost every word without meaning to. The voice mentioned a name which Ehrenburg did not catch at first and had to have repeated for him, and then he asked what was the matter. The other once more repeated his name, the voice still cheerful and jovial. He said he had been appointed as the new editor of Ehrenburg's volume of essays. Ehrenburg once more asked for his name, and then enquired whether he was a specialist in French literature. The voice on the telephone, still jovial and confident, replied: "Well, I haven't been one for very long." He would have to have a talk with Ehrenburg, there were a number of unresolved questions that his predecessor had left behind. Ehrenburg's tone became a little cooler as he asked whether the other had read the two letters in which he had already elucidated these questions. The other said he had seen only one of them. "Read them both before we talk." And they made an appointment for the following day. The editor's voice was a little less jovial as he rang off.*

Ehrenburg replaced the receiver, lit another cigarette, and leaned back in his chair. Our conversation became more ordinary and slowly petered out. I looked at his bookshelves and took out *Julio Jurenito* which was in the upper left-hand corner, in several languages. This early book of his has never appeared in the Soviet Union, and I remarked that it was indeed probably not very suitable, but that I liked it best of all his novels. Ehrenburg smiled, and said he was very fond of *Julio Jurenito* too. "A little mischievous," he said (he used the French word *méchant*), "but very amusing."

* The editor who is made responsible for the revision of a given manuscript or appointed to collaborate with a given author is the first instance of censorship. He is the one who, following the instructions of his superiors in the publishing house and by arrangement with the Writers' Union, has to prepare the product that eventually has to pass muster with *Glavlit*, the highest censoring authority whose imprimatur must be given to novels, children's verses, the reports of foreign correspondents in Moscow, and the symphonies of Shostakovich before they may be published.

III. Alexei Surkov

THE attractive nobleman's palace on Vorovsky Street has a literary history: it served Leo Tolstoy as the model for the home of the Rostovs in *War and Peace*. The two single-storey wings which formerly housed the servants and horses enclose a small circular courtyard. Over the curving drive today pass the cars of members and officers of the Soviet Writers' Union, which has its headquarters here.

Inside there is the smell of papers and ink. I do not have to find my way alone through the dark narrow corridors. A dim-eyed young man is waiting for me at the foot of the steps. He stamps out his cigarette and asks me to accompany him. Under his jacket he wears a turtleneck sweater which gives him a Bohemian touch. His name is Medvedev and he regrets to inform me that Alexei Surkov, the secretary of the Writers' Union, will be a little late. Surkov is a very busy man; at the last minute we had had to change the time of our appointment because there was another meeting that he had to go on to. I wait for him in his office, a large, rather dark and pompous room, with a big writing-table at one end. A long conference table occupied the middle of the room, and on the walls hung oil portraits of Lenin and Stalin, and a tapestry into which Gorki's portrait had been woven. I sat down at a small smoking table near the window and put my cigarette into an ashtray with a bronze handle shaped like a dachshund. There is time to look round, but it is hardly worth it. The room betrays nothing.

The door opens. With rapid and powerful strides Alexei Surkov enters the room, a man in the late fifties, medium height, broad-shouldered. He must have been very strong in his younger years. Without much ceremony he draws a chair up to the table and gets

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the greetings over. The light grey-blue eyes behind the horn-rimmed spectacles are not without a trace of humour; his face is pink from the fresh air. Alexei Surkov was wearing a brown suit, a bluish-grey shirt with broad yellow stripes, and a narrow, tightly-knotted dark tie. He seems to be a man who doesn't spend much thought on his clothes. His manner of speaking and moving is emphatically masculine, and perhaps a little too boyish for his age. He speaks in an unusually loud voice so that at first, as I was sitting next to him, I feared that I might have unwittingly irritated him. But his voice is a part of his general manner, or else it was acquired at conferences and plenary sessions. He made a couple of friendly jokes, and after a brief preliminary round of general questions and answers went straight into the subject. From then on he took charge.

THERE are about 4,000 members of the Soviet Writers' Union, whose secretary, Alexei Surkov, has the dominating position in the organisation. All recognised Soviet writers are in the Union. A good third write in the Russian language; the Ukrainians are the next largest group, followed by the Baltic States, particularly Latvia, and new national literatures are constantly springing up. Since 1954, for example, the Chukti, a small Siberian people, have produced a written literature of their own, while the literatures of the Eastern Soviet peoples, which even up to twenty years ago consisted entirely of prose, now include dramatic works. Surkov says the Union is really an association of National Writers' Unions. But the Moscow headquarters is closest to the seat of power; it receives directives from the Party leaders and sees that they are put into practice. Meetings and conferences are not the only channel. "The Union publishes more than ten monthly periodicals. In addition there is *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, which comes out three times a week. In these ways the Union exercises a tremendous influence on literature; but it is not a bureaucratic influence," he insists. "It is exercised by the writers who edit these papers." I asked him how these monopolistic literary concerns choose their staff and members. "Any Soviet-minded person who accepts our reality and adopts it as his own can be a member. Of course, his writings must be valuable in themselves. We don't accept mere compilers." I wanted to find out more precisely how these principles of selection work out in practice. "Well, take an example. We did not expel Boris Pasternak, although he is a subjectivist and idealist poet." Surkov laughed rumblingly. "But we prefer dialectical thinkers. The very talented poet Anna Akhmatova belongs to the decadent school, it is true, but she is also a member of our Union." Surkov's words reminded me that in Zhdanov's time he had had to perform self-criticism because he had published some poems by Anna Akhmatova in a periodical he was then editing. But before I had a chance to enquire further into these contradictory and vague conditions of admission, Surkov had gone on to talk of a question that was greatly preoccupying him just then. "Sometimes we admit young people who have written only one book—quite often something autobiographical. That, of course, is no pledge of their future work. How easily they're admitted, and how difficult it is afterwards for literature to get rid of them! A book-keeper or carpenter who has once written does not want to go back to his work. Just the same, the age composition of the Union has changed a great deal. One generation was lost in the war; and in the 'thirties, when large-scale industrialisation began, many young people preferred technical occupations. In the classic age of Russian literature our writers were short-lived. Conditions have changed to-day. This year we shall be celebrating the anniversaries of 306 writers between the ages of 50 and 80. That's very fine, but it would be better if we had three youngsters for every greybeard. Four thousand writers sounds a great many; but if we had ten thousand they would find readers. A few of our publications run into millions, Mayakovsky or Sholokhov, for example, but it would be better if these millions were distributed among the works of several writers."

There are, of course, other possible explana-

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tions of the comparative scarcity of young Soviet writers. In conversation once, an elderly writer told me that many talented young people, who were themselves quite capable of creative work, worked as translators because they were unwilling to submit to the criticism and tutelage of the Party and the Writers' Union. Some students with literary leanings once assured me that literature would become lively again only when the present generation of officials and editors —whom they called opportunists—had resigned. The explanations vary, but the problem remains, and it appears the more perplexing when one learns from Surkov all that is being done for the young literary generation.

"We have seen to it that no young writer needs to travel the painful road that Gorki trod. We make sure that even the weaker writers, whose work is not really ripe enough for the press, are invited for discussion and consultation. There are groups and associations in the provinces, there are newspapers which look out for the work of young authors, there are anthologies published regularly in the provinces which give special consideration to their writing. We shall soon be publishing a periodical which will concentrate on the work of young authors."

SURKOV himself, the son of a poor peasant in the Yaroslavl district, who took up a number of different occupations before hitting on literature, worked for a long time on the periodical in which Maxim Gorki gave young writers their first chance. He was present at the foundation of the Gorki Institute for the encouragement of young writers. "For some time we admitted boys and girls of sixteen. We taught them how to write but they did not know what to write about. Just the same, we had some success—writers like Simonov, Aliger, Mikhalkov went through the Gorki Institute. Now they run courses for writers who have already written books but still feel the need for some further education. They come for a two-year course to the Institute. There is also a fund for financing travel by young writers."

I asked him whether the obligation to profess socialist realism, which is also a condition of admission to the Institute, did not restrict the choice of entrants. My enquiry, thought Surkov, touched on questions of method, and that was a very difficult matter. There was a great variety of writing in Soviet literature. He repeated what he had said about Pasternak's and Akhmatova's membership of the Writers' Union. In recent years socialist realism had been severely criticised, in the People's Democracies as well as in the West. But it had not been properly presented or explained, and that too was a very difficult matter. "Although I am a Communist, I would not care to let myself in just now for a talk on socialist realism. It is a very delicate theme. But this much I will say: We do not chop off writers' arms and legs in order to fit them into a small bed. Many changes are possible in a writer's style. Think of Mayakovsky. Or Alexei Tolstoy. He changed not only his views, which at one time were dominated by decadence and aristocratic realism, but also his literary method. Method is more than style and more than the creative individualist. Method embraces both, but it is even more. Ehrenburg and Simonov were wrong in interpreting socialist realism as a *Weltanschauung*. In any case, it is not a bludgeon for beating writers. Our literature is a tree in which no leaf is like any other leaf. Our literature—well, frankly, the chief thing is that on some questions we are of the same opinion. The revolution dragged literature out of its ivory tower and created conditions of existence in which sociological survivals of individualism are scarcely to be found, even though there are still a few individualists and egocentrics. But literature is a live thing, and we are not after all very far from 1917. If what I have said about socialist realism is perhaps not quite clear, please forgive me. It means that I cannot quite put into words something that is quite precise in my feelings."

I asked what it was that the critics and the leaders of the Writers' Union called "unhealthy tendencies" in Soviet literature. To this Surkov had a ready answer.

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"The years since Stalin's death have left their mark on the life of our country and also on its intellectual life. When our party frankly admitted that in the last years of Stalin's life such and such anomalous things happened, many people got the impression that for thirty years Stalin had stood on the captain's bridge and now everything had to be revaluated, everything had to be preceded by a minus sign. That caused confusion, and many people to whom everything had appeared rosy, Dudintsev for example, suddenly began to write books like *Not by Bread Alone*. Novels and poems of that kind appeared, and suddenly, although the day before everything had been seen in a rosy light, what we got was a picture of misery. But most of our writers thought that replacing pink by black was just as harmful and unhistorical as the earlier varnishing. Other writers began to question the leading rôle of the Party. They began by criticising the personality cult and then went on: 'In the 'twenties we had a splendid literature written by innovators; but in the 'thirties they were cut down by the *Zhdanovshchina*.' Criticism from abroad had a definite purpose: it is easier to do battle with an enemy if you first cut off his head. Strangely, even a few of our own people virtually committed suicide. Ehrenburg, for example, was always sending paradoxical utterances to our literary journals. But in fact many Russian literary works, which became known abroad too, were written in Zhdanov's time. The fourth volume of *Quiet Flows the Don*, for example, the third volume of Alexei Tolstoy's *Path of Suffering*, and the last volume of his *Peter the Great*. Alexander Tvardovsky, a recognised poet after all, began writing about 1940. Of course, like every other country, we have more bad books than good. But our critics are always looking for the bad ones."

I WANTED to know what precisely it was that he found so objectionable in Dudintsev's *Not by Bread Alone*. It was not for his negative types that Dudintsev was criticised, Surkov said. There were such types, and it was right to get angry about them and to write about them. "But the general tone of the novel makes it appear that these types are invincible. In his book the bad are the stronger. His hero, on the other hand, is a solitary person, rather like Prince Myshkin in Dostoevsky's *Idiot*. But an immense epoch lies between Dostoevsky and us. To hark back to Dostoevsky is dangerous because it is a violation of historical laws. Myshkin and Lopatkin would not have survived the storms of 1941. I remember that the Germans came not only with excellent weapons and the confidence of victory. They also had discipline. And neither Myshkin nor Lopatkin would have stood up to that discipline. That is why we criticise Dudintsev. When his book appeared we had not got our sputnik, but we turned against the book because we realised that Dudintsev was describing a milieu in which a sputnik could never have been launched. The periodical in which the novel appeared, and the edition when it came out as a book, were sold out. It was a sensation, but it will be a short-lived success. The book has perhaps two years more; it really is not great literature. What really happened was this: Ehrenburg's novel *The Thaw* was scarcely noticed, either in the U.S.S.R. or abroad, when it first came out. Then Simonov wrote a long article against it, and at once it became famous in other countries. When the second part appeared we had used up all our critical arguments on the first part, and let it go. Hardly anybody noticed that the book had appeared. Now we have Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago*. I have read the manuscript. It is the weakest piece of work this talented poet has produced. Pasternak himself places too high a value on it. He writes about his political sympathies, not about the problems of his art. They say he may be nominated for the Nobel Prize. He may even get it."

At this point Medvedev, who had up till then been listening quietly, shrugged his shoulders, drew down the corners of his mouth, and murmured, "For *Dr. Zhivago*?" Surkov went on. "Chekhov and Tolstoy did not get the Prize. Ivan Bunin was the only

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Russian to get it, and he got it only for his despicable anti-Soviet attacks as an emigré. Winston Churchill got a literature prize. And who got the Nobel Peace Prize? President Truman. The prize is a purely political affair." When I mentioned the names of a few other writers who had received the prize, Surkov toned down his remarks slightly, but by then he had worked himself up. The idea of a Nobel Prize for Pasternak seemed to annoy him deeply. His voice got louder and louder, and now, when my next question brought up a purely political subject, it got louder still. My ears were no more than half a yard from his mouth, but Surkov spoke as though he were addressing a plenary session of his Union. I had put the following argument: If the sputnik demonstrates so clearly that Dudintsev's picture of Soviet life is false, why cannot the masses themselves be trusted to form their own opinion, without any official condemnation of his novel? Surkov waved my question aside with an impatient movement of his hand. "The masses are the masses and they will always be led by somebody. In America, for example, which you I suppose regard as a democracy, there are only two parties, which are exactly like each other. Howard Fast, who now writes about us in a very unfriendly way, used to be scarcely known in the United States. Why? Because he was a Communist. Just the same he was a good writer. There may be a Socialist party or a Communist party in the United States, but they haven't a press of their own and hence they have no chance."

My question whether the Communist press in Russia had had better opportunities before the revolution remained unanswered, for Surkov had become as excited as he was noisy when he embarked on his political indictment. The United States had profited from two wars in which the Soviet Union and Germany had gained nothing but corpses. He was indignant about the bombing of Dresden. "If the Americans had suffered as much, perhaps they would not be so belligerent to-day. But they profited from the war; they got richer and richer, because they lived thousands of miles away from the fighting. Even the workers made their bit out of the war industries." He was now talking so fast that I could hardly take notes. The words whirled about the room: historical epoch, the end of Tsarism, pseudo-democracy and the February revolution, foreign colonialists, capitalism, end of capitalism, and so on.

"We, Communists and non-Party people, we know what we want. We want a world without any nuclear tragedies. We have no reason to throw stones at our government. It is always making proposals for peace, while the others always say 'No.' I came from Communism to literature, not the other way round. I am first and foremost a Communist. Intervention by the Party in literature does not worry me. Somebody is always interfering. And if someone has to interfere, it seems best to me that it should be an intelligent party and not an individual publisher."

I wanted to interject that in the West there is a choice between individual publishers, whereas in the East there was only one party. But my time was up. Surkov's meeting called. One of his two secretaries was already waiting to give him a red file bristling with seals.

The interview was at an end.

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LETTER FROM AMERICA

The City Eviscerated

William H. Whyte, Jr.

AMERICA needs more people who like cities. The statement may seem exceptionable—in the U.S., as elsewhere, this is a time of "urbanisation," and each year more people are living in metropolitan areas than ever before. Urban redevelopment has become one of the most fashionable of causes; everybody, it would seem, is for the rebuilding of cities, and in almost every big one, architects and planners are building or planning a striking series of towers and malls. But that is not the same thing as *liking* cities. Most of the rebuilding is being designed by people who dislike, not only the noise and the dirt and the congestion of the city, but its variety and concentration as well, its tension, its hustle and bustle. The new redevelopment projects will be physically in the city, but in spirit they deny it—and in a profound misreading of a city's values, architects and developers are fast making the improbable combination of the "garden city" and Le Corbusier's towers into the architectural cliché of our times.

In this rejection of the city they reflect what seems to be a growing alienation between the city and what most people conceive of as the American way of life. More and more, in the middle-class view, the city is becoming a place of extremes—a place for the very poor, or the very rich, or the slightly odd. Here and there, in pleasant tree-shaded neighbourhoods, there are still islands of middle-class stability, but for the young couples on the way up—most young couples, at any rate—those are neighbourhoods of the past. They are often the last stand of an ethnic group, and the people in them are getting old. The once dominant white Protestant majority has long since dispersed; and among the Catholics and the Jews who have been the heart of the city's middle class, the younger people are leaving as fast as they are able.

When scarcely any but the well-to-do lived in suburbia, a home there was a desirable goal; now it is becoming a social imperative. By 1945 more Americans were home owners than renters; each year since, almost a million families have been joining the majority, and almost all of this increase has been taking place in the new subdivisions of suburbia. Between 1950 and 1955 the total number of people in the country's metropolitan areas increased by 12 million; within the *city* limits, however, the number increased only slightly, and in some cities actually declined.

Is this "urbanisation"? The term is misleading. What is taking place is a sub-urbanisation, and in this centrifugal movement the city has been losing some of its traditional strength as a unifying element of the region. While suburban neighbourhood newspapers are showing marked increases, big metropolitan papers are barely holding their own. On the fringes of the city, people are no longer drawn inward towards the centre, but outward to the new shopping centres. Los Angeles, which has sometimes been called 100 suburbs in search of a city, shows the pattern at its most extreme; there is hardly any centre at all, and what centre there is seems useful to most citizens chiefly as a way to get from one free-way to another.

Clearly, the norm of American aspiration is now in suburbia. The happy family of TV commercials, of magazine covers and ads, lives in suburbia; wherever there is an identifiable background it is the land of blue jeans and shopping centres, of bright new schools, of barbecue-pit participation, garden clubs, P.T.A., do-it-yourself, and green lawns. Here is the place to enjoy the new leisure, and as more people make more money and spend less time making it, the middle-class identification with suburbia will be made more compelling yet. The momentum would seem irresistible. It is not merely that hundreds of thousands have been moving to suburbia; here they are breeding a whole generation that will never have known the city at all.

Nor its values. Heterogeneity, concentration,

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specialisation, tension, drive—the characteristics of the city have often been demeaned, but rarely have they been demeaned with such unwonted vigour. "I'm getting out of your skyscraper jungle," says the hero of the typical anti-success novel, and as he tells off the boss, inevitably he tells off the city as well. "To hell with your fur-lined trap, your chrome-plated merry-go-round," he says, and with pious indignation heads for the country and peace of mind.

YET there is a counter-current. In numbers, the people who make it up are few, but for the city are of great importance. If it is to reassert itself as the dominant cultural force, it must have a strong core of people to support its institutions, its specialty shops, its museums and theatres and restaurants. For it is people who like living in the city that make it a magnet to those who don't. It is the city dwellers who give it its style; without them there is nothing to come downtown *to*.

When my colleagues and I started work on a survey (for *Fortune* magazine) of the city's market, we were very sceptical of the talk about a return flow from suburbia. We knew, of course, that there would always be a steady movement back by older people, but we doubted if there had been any significant increase even in this respect. As we began interviewing, however, we ran across more and more evidence that a shift was taking place; a surprising number of people in city neighbourhoods were people who had moved back from suburbia—and some of these were young married couples with children. We also found that an appreciable number of city people were moving to suburbia only because they had to; given a little more space, and at not too exorbitant a price, they would prefer to stay.

In talking to people who have chosen the city, one discovers that averages are meaningless; if anything distinguishes these people it is that in some important respect they are *not* average. They may be single, or childless couples, or people who work odd hours (like journalists). If there is a common denominator it is, simply, that they *like* cities—and this, of course, is very unaverage indeed.

Some planners think the city's salvation lies in holding—or attracting back—the middle-income family, and they are unhappy that under the different governmental programmes the only subsidised housing is for the poor: with very few exceptions the family with a median income (now about $5,000) can't qualify for public housing in the city. There is a good case for more middle-income housing in the city; there is a very poor one for middle-income housing *projects*—at least, as they are generally conceived. It is very easy to equate "middle income" with "middle class"; and in failing to make a distinction, planners are trying to cater to precisely the kind of people who don't *want* to stay in the city. Many of the young couples who are moving from the lower to the middle class may have to stay in the city for a while, but once they have the money to move to suburbia, the great majority leave—and they wouldn't want to stay even if you paid them to.

"Middle income" includes all sorts of people. And small or odd as each group may be, it is an aggregate of these groups, not a middle mass, that the city should look to. There are, for example, the young college girls for whom the city is so exciting a prelude to marriage and suburbia. They don't make much money but two or three will get together to rent a maisonette, and as one by one each departs, another girl will come in to keep the leasehold going. Then there are the single people; even though their incomes don't qualify them for high-rent apartments, they are the best prospects for them; they will often spend far more than twenty or twenty-five per cent of their income for their quarters.

The people who return from suburbia aren't average either. In one way or another the suburban way of life has become a bore to them; it's not just that the children have grown up and moved away; they don't see any real meaning in the social and civic activity there—and never did, some add. Earlier, when there were children's problems to talk about, the wife may have been close to people with whom she really had little in common. Now she can't stand the prattle and she is increasingly drawn to the city. Husbands, almost exultantly, say they're damn happy to be done with Do-It-Yourself. No more hobby room, no more bookcase building—and they speak so feelingly about the grass as to suggest that the suburban lawn may be the saving of the city.

THEY speak often of the cultural life they now enjoy—of the museums and theatres and the symphony, and of window shopping on the avenues. Whether they actually go to the museums and theatres and the symphony more often than the confirmed suburbanite is a moot point, and not a very important one. The enjoyment may be vicarious, but it is real enough. Even the touch of Sodom and Gomorrah intrigues them; they may never go to a night-club, but they enjoy the thought that if ever they were of a mind, there would be something interesting to go out to. "No matter what goes on," as a Chicago man put it, "it goes on *here*."

It is the convenience of things that the returnees speak most of all. Help is easier to get, and stores are close by. Transportation is easy

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too, and a lot of things are within a few minutes' walk. Wives say how nice it is now that they see more of their husbands, and not in a bad temper from commuting, either. Husbands, now only minutes away from the office, are delighted with the extra two hours they now have. Commuting, many say, took too much of life, and they mention such newfound pleasures as strolling home and gloating down from the terrace at the jammed cars fighting their way to suburbia. "I used to be one of those poor fools," said one returnee recently, twisting the lemon peel into the martini pitcher, "now I feel ten years younger."

The returnees don't miss the country. Many of them see more of the real country out beyond suburbia than the suburbanites do; quite often, they will have a place in the woods or at the shore, and now that they're no longer tied down to the suburban house, they find they use the week-end cottage or cabin or "farm" more often. The two-dwelling family is still the exception, but as suburbia fills up, the combination of an apartment in town and a place in the real country is becoming a more and more attractive idea to the upper-income groups.

A small but not significant minority of returnees are younger married couples. They moved back, they explain, *because* of the children. These are couples whose families have grown from two or three children to four, five, or six, who can't afford a larger house in suburbia but have discovered big, old, gingerbread houses in the city that are within their means. Despite the violence in many of its streets, many couples maintain that the city can be a better place to raise children than suburbia. In the city, they believe, the children are brought up in an environment closer to reality; it is one geared to adults, not children, and unlike the one-class communities of the new suburbia, it exposes children to all kinds of people, coloured and white, old and young, poor and rich.

In cities with a supply of good old houses, the demand is higher for them than for new houses, even though the mortgages may require 20 to 40 per cent cash instead of 5 to 10 per cent. Heating can be a problem, couples say, but the houses are actually easier to keep tidy than the more compressed ranchers, and it's wonderful to have extra rooms upstairs for the children to play in. And many families welcome that vanishing American institution, the dining-room.

Schools, of course, are a critical problem. Private schools in cities across the country are being swamped with far more applicants than they can handle. In part this is due to the population increase, but it is also due to a rise in the number of people coming back from suburbia. Last year New York's Buckley School (a boys' elementary school) found that the number of applications from families which had just moved back from the suburbs was three times greater than in 1950; and last year there were no withdrawals because parents were moving to suburbia.

For many city parents, "the school problem" is a euphemism for the "Negro problem," and in prophesying a revival of city living, one must note that the Negro population of the cities will be rising. The flow of migrants from poor rural areas in the South will continue for some time to come and for other city dwellers, white and Negro, they will long be a problem. But the Negro middle class will be constantly widening too. No millennium in racial harmony is imminent, yet it should be remembered that much of the racial friction in cities to-day has less to do with skin colour than the new arrivals' lack of knowledge of such rules of the game as not throwing garbage out the window.

Middle-class Negroes, however, know the rules quite as well as middle-class whites, and the two can get along better than is commonly supposed. What, for example, of the "well-known" fact that middle-class whites will not move into a neighbourhood Negroes are also moving into? In Philadelphia the Redevelopment Commission recently made a study of several predominantly white neighbourhoods into which Negroes had been moving. A check of all the property transactions in these areas revealed that 1,730 Negro families had moved in during 1955; during the same period, 485 white families moved in as well.

What kind of people were the whites? Of the 272 families interviewed, a high proportion were foreign-born and first-generation couples; the majority of the families with school-age children were Catholic, and for them mixed schools were not an issue because their children would be going to the parochial schools. Few families seemed to harbour any racial hostility; most didn't seem to care much one way or the other about the fact there were Negroes in the neighbourhood.

But there is no denying that the proportion of Negroes in a neighbourhood is a critical factor. Once the percentage of Negroes gets over a certain point—it seems to range between 10 and 20 per cent—whites generally will move out. In housing developments, it has been found that "open occupancy" eventually means almost 100 per cent Negro occupancy, and Negro leaders themselves are leaning to the idea of quotas. Quota used to be a fighting word with them, but, privately at least, many see some form of quota

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as the only way the Negro middle class can achieve integration.

Suburbia is going to help the city, too. Success is spoiling it, and within ten years there is likely to be a brutal disillusionment for thousands of new suburbanites. Quite literally, they are living on borrowed time. The younger married couples who have been moving out from the city are seeking an economic impossibility; they want a high level of schools and municipal services, and they want low taxes. In many new suburbs, taxes have already climbed very close to city levels—yet still lacking are such city services as trash collection.

As suburbia expands, furthermore, the journey to work is going to be a punishingly long one for many people, and the compensations less. For will suburbia be in the country any more? The "outrage" of which the *Architectural Review* has spoken so forcefully is appallingly evident in the U.S. countryside; these new suburbs aren't the tidy little regional towns of planners' dreams; they are sprawling all over the place; the country the new suburbanites sought begins to vanish as soon as the next subdivision goes up, and in the exploitation of land most of the new suburbs have been repeating the errors that got the city in such a mess. Even the plans for parks and playgrounds we do have, seem to get lost. (In the New York area there is such a shortage of recreation areas that the older suburbs are taking police action to keep residents of other communities from using their playgrounds and their public golf courses.)

For all the obstacles, to recapitulate, there are many people who want to live in the city. They are different, but in one respect they are similar; they *like* the city. They like the privacy; they like the specialisation, and the hundreds of one-of-a-kind shops; they like the excitement—to some, the sirens at night are music—they like the heterogeneity, the contrasts, the mixture of odd people.

AND how are the architects and planners responding? With superb technical ability and a truly remarkable unity of approach, they are freezing on a design for living that is the antithesis of everything the city stands for. Typically, the new projects consist of a series of high-rise tower apartments set in geometric patterns on an abstract green space carefully preserved against human encroachment. The results are not "cities within cities," but anti-cities, and it is characteristic that they are sealed off from the surrounding neighbourhoods as if they were set in cornfields miles away.

Ironically, the "garden city" movement may turn out to have the greatest impact on the central city. Ever since Ebenezer Howard first began arguing a half-century ago for the self-contained garden town out in the country, the idea has exerted a great influence on planners—and much of it has been very much to the good. In America, notably in the work of Clarence Stein and his associates, it has produced such pleasant suburban villages as Radburn in New Jersey and Baldwin Hills in California. There have not been many of them, but they have had a consideravle effect on the designs of the frankly commercial developments.

In its pure form the garden city is obviously not suited to the central city—its houses are two stories high, and there is a great amount of green space for gardens and playgrounds. But then, some twenty-five years after it was conceived, city rebuilders discovered Le Corbusier's "La Ville Radiuse"; in this plan towers concentrated such masses of people that there could be a high density of people per acre and lots of open space too. In its pure form it wasn't suited to the city either—it was far too stark and too patently collective.

But it had a tremendous appeal to the ego of architects—instead of giving over green space to people to clutter up, it could be massed in great malls, and the architects' monoliths could be set off all the better. By the late 'thirties most public housing projects were being cast in this form. To-day it is the standard design for every kind of big housing project, for rich or poor.

Even at its best the garden city is not a city; and were the design not so sanctified by utopianism, some first-hand observation could have revealed this to planners long ago. It is not just the economics of green space; all the assumptions on which the design is based—from the uniformity of the apartments to the placement of the community stores—presupposes a suburban culture and a fairly homogeneous middle-class society.

Do city people *want* to live in such places? Architects don't; as Henry Churchill observes, most of them wouldn't be caught dead inside their dull utopias—sensibly, they look for an old house they can fix up into something amiable. Most people don't have the choice; for lack of an alternative, many will live in these projects, and thus to a degree the architects' vision will be self-confirming. But will form follow function? There is plenty of evidence that the project approach now dominant is not only bad æsthetically, but socially and economically as well.

FIRST, the scale of the projects is uncongenial to the human being. It is uncongenial because the projects are designed to satisfy the architect's notions of visual pleasure, and this

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often has very little to do with the way people actually see things. The use of green space is revealing. Architects are proud that in the usual project between 60 and 80 per cent of the land is given over to green space. But the green space is not the kind people use; it is massed in great malls or ovals. Chains are usually provided to keep them undefiled, but this is supererogatory; the unrelieved order of the open space is oppressive enough so that people won't use them anyway.

Architects shouldn't become sociologists, but it certainly would be a help if they would spend some time observing how people actually use open space. Some of the earlier "garden cities," which they invoke so frequently to justify their malls, would be especially instructive. As at Baldwin Hills, there are often two kinds of green space; on one hand, the small, intimate areas between the small buildings, often with individual gardens or patios for each apartment; on the other hand, large open malls in the centre of the projects. By simply looking, architects would soon see that people use the small areas and stay away from the malls and the ovals.

Recently I remonstrated with a noted architect about this, and asked why the big malls got copied in the new projects and the small green spaces didn't. I had missed the point, he said; the malls tied the whole thing together and gave it visual coherence. Without such unifying elements, he said, people wouldn't have a sense of place.

From his point of view he was right; his point of view was about a quarter mile up in the air, looking down. From this perch, what seems empty on the ground makes for order and logic and symmetry; what seems intimate and congenial is "busy" detail and distraction. It is no wonder that scale models or architectural renderings of new projects are almost invariably shown in bird's eye view (with the background of existing streets and buildings softened to a blur); they are "bold statements," to use the argot, and not only do they satisfy the ego of the architect, they satisfy the egos of civic leaders anxious for a spectacular municipal show.

And the end result is always the same. In virtually every city, regardless of its terrain, or its special characteristics, the same design is repeated time and again; no hint of regional tradition, no native materials or architectural details disturb its bleak uniformity. Even in San Francisco, alas; for this enchantingly individual city the redevelopers have planned a rectangular group of office towers, and on the other side of a vast concrete plateau another series of apartment towers—just like New York, or Chicago, or just about every other city.

THE institutional approach is universal. The projects are institutions, they run like institutions, and they look like institutions. Keep off the grass. No car-washing allowed: these stalls are for storage only. No velocipedes permitted in play areas. Private property; no parking except by special permit. Everywhere the admonitory hand is raised. Children, patently, are a problem; there are fenced-in play areas for the little beggars, but they won't stay in line and they continually deface the sidewalks with chalk for hopscotch.

A key word is "self-contained"; as much as possible, these places are constructed like islands, insulated from the unseemly clutter of surrounding areas. In the city, the street is usually a unifying element in a neighbourhood. The planners, however, have borrowed the suburban concept of the street as a divider, and have set up a sort of *cordon sanitaire*. One of the delights of the city, its variety of stores and specialised services, is banished. As *Architectural Forum*'s Jane Jacobs has pointed out, the little candy stores, the corner delicatessens, and such are social centres. "They are the institutions that people create, themselves. Some very important sides of city life, much of the charm, the creative social activity, and the vitality shift over to the old areas because there is literally no place for them in the new scheme of things. This is a ludicrous situation and it ought to give planners the shivers."

Redevelopers have taken the suburban shopping-centre approach. Instead of finding a new expression of the amenity of the corner store, they have acted as if the project were out in the country, and have planned for the driver, rather than the pedestrian. There are no stores in the heart of the project, not even a vending machine in the basement, and it's a long, long walk if you run out of cigarettes at night. There is one shopping centre, and it is usually on the far edge of the project.

Why? Function must follow form. In the early stages of a residential redevelopment project for south-west Washington, for instance, there were plans for several small stores in the ground floor of each tower. On second thought, they were revoked. They would be too convenient, it was decided; the shopping centre on the periphery would suffer as a result.

Even out on the periphery the antisepsis remains inviolate. In most projects there will be a chain supermarket, a drugstore, a cleaning establishment, perhaps a stationery shop, and, inexorably, a modern colonial multipurpose restaurant with piped music, a smiling hostess holding up two fingers, and a soda bar. No raffishness; you can get a drink if you order one, but in these lugubriously wholesome surround-

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ings you'll feel furtive about it, and getting drunk is psychologically impossible. Not surprisingly, wherever these new projects have gone up, a host of little enterprises has sprung up on the bad side of the street as witness to the vacuum of the design. Visually, the effect is enough to drive an architect crazy; grocery stores with fruit out in the street, discount houses covered with garish signs, pastry shops, delicatessens, a Happy Time Bar and Grill, and a host of other perversities to clutter up design. People are just no damn good.

IN design and spirit these new projects are an outgrowth of public housing; indeed, a person has to look twice to see whether a project is public housing or high-rent housing (one clue: air conditioners). In borrowing the form, however, most redevelopers have overlooked a shattering fact: the standard high-rise public housing project, it has turned out, doesn't work very well.

Some of the reasons it doesn't are peculiar to public housing. Most of the lessons, however, are uncomfortably pertinent to upper-income housing. Most public-housing experts now agree that the "self-contained" neighbourhood that turns its back on the surrounding streets, so far from improving the neighbourhood around it, depresses the whole area; second, the institutional design, with its lack of stores and small amenities, is a design that does not encourage normal neighbourhood life; third, the high-rise buildings are not suited to family needs. Families don't like to live high up; as study after study has demonstrated, what they want is a yard or a porch or a terrace *of their own.*

There is no economic law that housing propects have to be institutional. One of the most noted of recent ones, the Easter Hill project near San Francisco, is to some eyes downright messy; its rows of two-storey houses and apartments clamber up and down over a hilly area, and architects Vernon De Mars and Donald Hardison had such a light touch with the bulldozer that most of the rocks have been left where they were. (De Mars is an apostle of "non-composition" or "planned chaos.") Some visiting experts have been appalled by the seeming disorder of the place: each house has its own yard, but there are no fenced-in play areas, no big vistas, no chains across the grass, and with children roaming all over the rocks, the effect *is* a bit unsymmetrical. Somehow it seems to work out fine.

The remodelled town-house streets, at the other end of the economic scale, also have a story to tell redevelopers. The Georgetown area of Washington is a notable example; thirty years ago much of it had become a slum, but to-day its colonial brick and frame houses provide as attractive a setting as any in Washington. In Philadelphia, a white invasion has been moving slowly from the centre of the city, and if the visitor will walk along some of the small streets and alleys he can see the transition. At one end there will be tiny little "bandbox" houses still crowded with Negroes; but from the other end white families are moving down, house by house, tacking up café curtains or painting flowers on the white-washed brick. (Let one in a neighbourhood, it has been observed, and they take over the place.)

For all the occasional preciousness, people move into such areas out of plain commonsense. These streets provide an intimate scale and a minimum of traffic and noise. There is variety too; each house is done differently, and usually there is at least one hideous house to relieve the good taste. The green space is small; often it is only a fourteen-by-fourteen backyard with a lone sumac tree in the middle, but even this ignoble weed seems to give more pleasure to people than acres of abstract green sward.

There is a moral here for redevelopers. Obviously, fixed-up town houses can satisfy only a small fraction of the market, but the fact that people are often willing to pay quite high prices for them would suggest that they meet some human needs worthy of more attention from architects and redevelopers.

SOME high-rise projects point the same moral. In the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co.'s projects, such as Parklabrea in Los Angeles and Parkmerced in San Francisco, most of the apartment units are contained in colonies of high-rise towers, but there are also some sections of pleasant two-storey duplexes grouped around patios. The difference in consumer preference? It is overwhelming: at Parklabrea the wait for a tower apartment is only a few months, but so many people want patio apartments that the management has had to stop taking applications. At Parkmerced, where there was a waiting-list almost from the beginning for the patio apartments, the occasionally fog-bound towers remained nearly vacant for three years.

The patio apartments are less expensive than the towers (about $120 for a two-bedroom apartment vs. about $145), but this fact doesn't account for the overwhelming preference. What it does indicate is that patio apartments are not only more pleasant, they are quite as economic to build. In New York, for example, the capital cost (not counting the land) of low-rise co-operative apartments is $2,300 per room; in tower co-operatives it is $2,700.

Land costs? Towers do pack in "more people" on the ground they actually cover, but this density is purchased at considerable cost; as advo-

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cates of all-tower projects proudly point out, huge vistas are set aside for light and air, so that only about 25 or 30 per cent of the high-cost ground is actually covered.

Far more economic is a *combination* of low buildings and high. In such a design the two forms borrow room from each other. No longer does open space have to be squandered. The houses and their gardens provide the air and light the towers need; and the towers complement the houses by raising the overall density. In the combination project, density can range as high as seventy-five families per acre—about the maximum that is comfortable in any kind of project, all tower or not.

Aesthetically, the combination can be equally pleasing—and eminently contemporary. For the redevelopment of Detroit's Gratiot area, Mies van der Rohe himself, the most noted architect of the "international style," has designed some very attractive town houses to complement apartment towers. He hasn't provided very many—84 per cent of the apartment units will be in the high-rise buildings—but those he has should at least certify for younger architects that the low-rise house is not blasphemous.

Such projects can recapture the pleasures of the best of the old residential blocks. In a redevelopment project for Washington, architects I. M. Pei and Harry Weese have come up with a "residential-square" design reminiscent of New York's famous McDougal Gardens block, where restored brick houses have gardens facing into a jointly-owned green space for children to play in, safe from traffic. The "residential squares" are a modern variant; their three-storey row houses (which will have garages on the street side of the first storey) will provide private gardens, and in the centre, a co-operatively-owned green space.

The high-rise tower, furthermore, doesn't have to be stark. If it is agreeably designed, and so located that it can give a view of something else besides identical high-rise buildings, it can offer very pleasant living. And there is no reason why the design cannot provide usable open space instead of the mean little slabs that pass for balconies in most buildings.

THE desire for monumentality is not to be demeaned, and the exuberance and gusto without which there can be no revival of the city will always find some expression in design. But let it, to borrow a phrase, be adapted to function. Rarely before have cities had such a chance to experiment with new ideas. Large-scale action is necessary, to be sure, but the tirelessly repeated phrase about making no little plans should perhaps be given a rest. If the parts aren't any good, the whole won't be any good either. Little plans, lots of them, are just what are needed—high-rise and low, super-blocks and small blocks.

To argue particulars, however, can be futile. It is the image of what a city should be that ultimately determines them, and it is in this intangible area that one must hope for changes. The old conventional image of the city is bad enough—a place of fouled streets and of evil and corruption. But is the new one any better? Too many people seem incapable of visualising any mediating alternative; characteristically, documentary films about urban renewal rarely show anything *good* about cities the way they are—it's either rats or trash and such on one hand; smiling faces in new housing projects on the other.

Fortunately, cities are really much more interesting than that. Being full of people, they are wonderfully resilient, and not all the super-blocks and concrete prairies can take the life away. It seems a pity that the attempt has had to be made, but at least it is not disarming, thanks be; the assault is direct and it should make us mindful of what we have so long taken for granted.

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Frank Norman

A Bit About Slang

The author of this article is already known to our readers as J.F.N. 1797, whose memorable report on "Corrective Training" appeared in our May issue. That report has formed the basis of a book, which Secker and Warburg will very shortly publish. In our next issue, Mr. Norman will give us an account of his experiences since he was "correctively trained." We have taken the liberty of correcting Mr. Norman's spelling—which has, in any case, enormously improved since last our readers had sight of it.—EDS.

WHEN I thought about writing this piece about slang I wondered where would be the best place to start; it is a very difficult subject to write about when you have been talking it for the best part of your life as I have; you see, to someone like me, there is nothing whatever strange about it, in fact it is really like the man in the street trying to explain the English language. He, like me, would very likely have quite a job on his hands. For instance, there are quite a few words which are different yet which mean the same thing and there are quite a few words that are the same but which have different meanings. Take a word like *bird*. I think it is fairly well known that this word means "girl" or "woman," but perhaps it is not so well known that bird also means "time"; this comes from rhyming slang (*bird-lime*) and this also has two meanings. "I've only got another two months 'bird' to do." And "Do you know what the 'bird' is, John?" Then there is also *dicky-bird*, which is rhyming slang for "word." See what I mean? Some words seem obscure and do not look as though they have anything to do with the thing that they mean. One of the best examples of this is the word *geezer*; the predecessor of this word was *mug*, this was rhymed with "steam-tug," so for a while the word *steamer* took its place; but not for long because it wasn't all that long before it was changed again, this time it became descriptive of what a steamer is, hence *geezer*, which gives off hot water and quite a lot of steam!

Some slang is very old and I think I am right in saying that most of these are words and phrases that are used in the *nick* (prisons). I wouldn't mind betting that a cell was called a *peter* before it was called a cell; if you follow me! Another one with whiskers on is *screw*; this goes back before there were locks on prison cells, instead they were *screwed* up. There are quite a few more which I expect we will come across as we go along.

Cockney or *lags* (convicts') slang is not the only slang that is used in this country; there is also drug addicts, queers and lez, and back slang, although the last one is no longer used to any great extent. Slang which is used by drug addicts is very closely linked with that which is used by musicians, and the queers and lez is very closely linked with prostitute (*brasses*) slang. I will deal with each of these a little later. Let us first have a closer look at Cockney slang. I think the best way is to use some of it in a conversation between two geezers, one called Bill and the other called Cecil. They are laying about in a *kayf* (café)

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up *west* (the West End). The night before they have had it off on a *screwer* (burglary) for a nice little *tickle* (lot of money).

BILL: What do yer *reckon* (think of) that *bogey* (policeman) who came *sticking his hooter* (putting his nose) round that *gaff* (house) when we were in there last night?

CECIL: To tell yer the truth I thought he *sused* (thought) there was something *buzzing* (going on). And I expected him to get on the *blower* (phone) to the *nick* (police station) and ask them to send the *hurry up* (police car).

BILL: No, I don't think he *sused* anything, because he was only a youngster just starting up in the game. But even if he had tumbled to us we would have had plenty of chances of having it away a bit on the hurry up because we had the motor out the back.

CECIL: I can't afford to get captured because I've already got six *cons* (convictions) and the last time I went *up the steps* (the sessions) the judge *stuck me in promise land for a neves* (told me I would get seven years next time).

BILL: Well, I don't know what you're screaming about, because I'm a dead cert to get *P.D.* (preventive detention) the next time I go up. And I've already heard a *whisper* (word) that there's a *W* (warrant) out for me up North.

CECIL: Do leave off.

BILL: It's alright for you, you're *laughing* (all right). You haven't got a *W* out for you. If you had I bet your *bottle would fall out* (you would be scared).

CECIL: Any old how I didn't know you had as many *cons* as that, what did you get them for?

BILL: Well, if you must know, I got my first one for a *jump up* (stealing a lorry), and one for a *blag* (wages snatch), and another for *tooling some flash tearaway* (cutting a geezer with a razor). Then I got a capture down to *larking* (nothing) when some *grass* (informer) told the law I had *blown a peter* (robbed a safe), when it wasn't me at all. And the other two I got for *smashes* (smash and grabs).

CECIL: Versatile, ain't yer!

You can hear conversations like this anywhere, that is, if you ever go anywhere. I know some geezers who talk like that the whole time, and the truth is they just don't know any other way to talk, and as a matter of fact I myself have only just started to talk "proper" and the only reason for this is because the people I talk to most these days wouldn't understand what I was talking about. I could if I had the room write pages and pages of conversations like that without hardly ever repeating myself, but that would be writing a book and I am not doing that, and I think it would get a bit boring after a while. Another thing I am trying very hard not to do is write a dictionary but I think that occasionally I will have to do something of the kind because it is the only way to explain meanings. For example, "money" has a slang name; *gilt*, is one, and there are many others; also most amounts of money have slang terms; some are rhyming, some racing, and some I do not have a clue about even though I have used them for years. As I have said, I think the only thing to do is have a short dictionary so that I can get them all in.

Penny—*Clod.*
sixpence—*Tanner* (you all know)
shilling—*Chip*
one and six—*Ky-bosh*
two and six—*Tosheroon*
five shillings—*Caser*
ten shillings—*Cows* (rhyming: cow's calf)
pound—*Nicker, once'r*, or *quid*
two pounds—*Duce* or *bice*
three pounds—*Tray* (but not used much)
four pounds—*Rouf*
five pounds—*Jack* (Jack-Alive)
seven pounds—*Neves*
ten pounds—*Cockle* (rhyming: cock and hen)
twenty pounds—*Score*
twenty-five pounds—*Pony*
fifty pounds—*Half a ton*
one hundred—*Ton*, or a *one'r*
two hundred—*Twoer*
And so on up to five hundred which is a *Monkey*.

So there you are, now you know as much as I do about it. There are a few alternatives

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to the above but as they would only confuse you, and me too if it comes to that, I think the best thing is to leave them out. These slang terms for money are also used in connection with prison sentences, etc., although most of the terms for *bird* are entirely different. I think, while I am about it, I might as well give you them as well, in the form of another dictionary.

Three months—*A carpet*
six months—*Half a stretch*
one year—*A stretch*
eighteen months—*Eighteen moon*
twenty-one months—*Pontoon*
two years—*Two stretch*
three or over—*Lagging*
four—*Rouf*
five—*Handful*
seven—*Neves*
ten—*Cockle*

SLANG that is used in the nick is to a very large extent the same as that which is used by the Cockneys, but there is also a lot more that belongs to the nick alone. Quote: "I was doing three days *chokey* (bread and water), which I got for passing a *stiff* (note) to some *shmock* (tramp) who owed me a quarter of an ounce of *snout* (tobacco). Some *dodgey* (no good) *twirl* (warder) *clocked* (saw) me, and stuck me on the *carpet* (report). I didn't have no chance because it was a case of *bang to rights* (being captured red-handed). I tried to *chat* (talk) my way out of it but the old man didn't want to *know* (hear anything) I had to say. I don't reckon him nothing because you can't give him any of the *old moody* (fool him). But I don't care because I can do this *standing* (on my head) easily, I've only got another *moon* (month) and then I'll be laughing, in fact to tell you the truth I am feeling a bit *gatey* (jumpy) already.

"I had a *fair bird* (good girl) when I got *nicked* (caught) but after I had done a *carpet* (three months), she *gave me the belt* (finished with me) and went off with some *shfatzer* (negro), and the last I heard was he had *stuck her up the spout* (made her pregnant). I hope it drives her *bonkers* (mad) when she gets a *spook chavey* (negro child), that'll teach her not to go around *charvering* (having sex) all over the place."

This, like the conversation between Bill and Cecil, is the type of thing that is spoken every day in some quarters. *Moody*, like so many other words, does not only mean what it says above. It can also mean that you are trying to persuade someone that something is when it isn't, if you get me.

I think it might be a good idea to give a few other terms that are used in the nick, for instance: *darbes* (handcuffs), *P.O.* (principal officer), *piss hole* (lavatory), *meat wagon* (black maria), *half a sheet* (punishment that screws get, usually a fine).

BACK slang is probably the most simple form of slang and yet one of the hardest to understand. I have already said that this is not used so much these days; when it was used the place to hear it would have been around the race-tracks. It works like this: you take the first letter off each word and add it on the end (*e.g.*, *langs*). When you have done that, all you do is add an "a" (*langsa*). As a rule you don't do this with short words, but, on the other hand, you do sometimes. "I saw ouya the theroa ightna up the hpeilersa." What helps to make this so difficult is the fact that a lot of ordinary slang words are used, *shpeiler* (*hpeilersa*); see what I mean? When it is spoken at very high speed, it sounds like this:

"I had a ourfa on the omberna three ogda at the hitewa city the theroa day ndaa it ameca in at a underedha too one. But I tillsa oundwa up eadda kintsa, and adha to onca a acksja off a eezerga, osa I ouldca penoa a ankba at irofa up the hpeilersa the extna day."

I would like to have now a little *rabbit* (talk) about slang which is used by drug addicts; most of this comes to us from America where it is known as "ziph" or "jive." This, as I have mentioned, is very closely linked with that which is used by jazz musicians and it is in fact very closely linked with jazz itself, because it is very rhythmical

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and jazzy. Words like *cool* and *hot*, *charge*, *dope*, and *crazy* are good examples. A conversation between a *hop head* (cocaine or morphine addict) and a *shit smoker* (marijuana addict) goes a bit like this. We will call them the *junkey* and the *viper*.

JUNKEY: I wish I was still on the *shit*, man; I get my *kicks* with a *pop* in the main, but this *H* is givin' me the itch.

VIPER: I dig, man, my *chick*'s real tuned in to that *kick*, every time I see her she's doing a *flip*, but she's never got enough bread to give the *pusher*. She's real *gone*, dad; and she's never coming back. She thinks I'm a real sad *square*, 'cause I ain't got the habit yet.

JUNKEY: Don't let it get you, man, just never be a *main liner*, like me. I don't even *dig* them sounds no more; and *chicks* are just a *drag*.

VIPER: Yeah, *man*!

JUNKEY: I'll see you, man. I'm going to get myself a fix.

I don't think this needs very much explanation. This slang is not used very much over here as yet, but in my opinion, it will be very soon, not necessarily by drug addicts but by the beat generation when it arrives. There are few drug addicts in this country and I expect that this is another reason why this slang is not so widely known but, even so, I think it is of particular interest because of the difference between it and Cockney slang. In my opinion this slang is on a very much higher level than the Cockney; while the Cockney or lag's slang has a certain amount of humour, this has none, this is a desperate language which is used by desperate people.

As drug addicts slang is to musicians, so queers and lezs slang is to *brasses* (prostitutes). The best thing, once again, I think, will be to have a little *bunny* between a *queer* (homosexual) and a *lez* (lesbian) and a *brass*, which I think should be interesting considering that from my experience they don't talk to each other very much unless it's to *slag* one another (run each other down). (*Slag* also means someone who is no good.) We will call the queer, *Tangerine* (who is an old queen), and the brass *Chechee*, and the lez, we will call *Butch*, which is just another way of saying *lez*.

Chechee starts talking to Tangerine. "Get you, darling, all done up in drag, anyone would think you were a palone. I don't care what you do as long as you don't get on my beat, because I've only had three short times to-night, and one of them was a fladj merchant."

TANGERINE: Don't you have a go at me, dear, otherwise I'll get Butch to have a go at you.

BUTCH: You're very bold, darling, but it won't do you any good to camp around here. Why don't you go and get yourself a fair, and leave us alone.

TANGERINE: Do me one small favour, darling. I couldn't get a fair if I tried, you don't get any bent clients along here these days.

CHECHEE: I haven't got time to listen to you two talking about the bona home-is that you'd like to have; I've got to get the rent for my lumber gaff by the morning, otherwise my ponce will give me the slingers.

TANGERINE: Never mind, you can always find yourself another Johnson, darling, there's always plenty around.

BUTCH: What I need is a nice cinkey little mystery who hasn't lost her cherry yet; if I could find one, I'd go straight.

You will, I think, notice the difference between this slang and any other and I think you will agree with me about it being slightly unpleasant, but even so, I think it is very expressive. For the benefit of the uninformed, a *palone* is a girl and *drag* is women's clothes, a *short time* means exactly what it says, "the time it takes a brass to have sex with a client," and last but not least, a *mystery* is a young girl who no one knows anything about.

THERE you have four different types of slang, all of which are used to a greater or smaller extent in this country. There are, I am told, other slangs that are used up North and in Scotland, but as I have never been to either of these places, I am in no position to talk about them. The main one, of course,

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is the Cockney, and it is this one that I know most about, but even I cannot keep up with the changes that keep on occurring, almost daily. For instance, I was once having a rabbit with a geezer, about another geezer, when all-of-a-sudden he said: "I don't want to know nothing about that grass, I tumbled to him and gave him the *lonsdale*." Well, I've always reckoned myself pretty well up in what's buzzing, but *lonsdale* really stumped me, in fact, I didn't have the first sus of what he was bunnying about. Any old how, after a load of uming and aring, I asked him what this word meant, and it turned out that it was our old friend *belt*; if you know anything about the punching world, you will know that the Lonsdale Belt is a prize that is given to the winner of a boxing match, if that is what they happen to be fighting for. Although my friend had not actually given him the Belt, if you see what I mean.

Things like this are happening all the time and as I say they are very hard to keep pace with. I have not yet said very much about names that are given to crimes of one kind and another, and what is more I am not going to, at least not in any big way because that would be getting back to the dictionary that I don't want. But there are one or two that I think are worth mentioning: *Jar up* is one of these, because I think it conveys quite a bit of humour. A jar is a piece of imitation jewellery (tomfoolery) that has been so well made that it appears to anyone who isn't in the know as the real thing; and to do a jar up is to sell some burk a piece. The jar comes when the person who has bought it, finds out that it's a fake. *Turn-over* also has a certain amount of humour (but it does depend quite a lot on what you consider funny). It means that you have robbed someone who you have just done a job with of their share (although I don't know if this is considered a crime in the eyes of the law). It also has other meanings that I will not go into just at the moment.

One of the main things about slang which I like very much is the bond between one person who speaks it and another. It is like a club and if you are a member, you are one of the "chaps," and if you are not, you are a mug, but please don't get the idea that it is easy to be one of the "chaps" because that is by no means the case, there are a few people who rather like the idea of using a little slang in their conversation just to make it a little "flowery," but these geezers, even if they become proficient, are still not accepted by the "chaps"; because you have to know the whole language backwards.

Dirge

Nitto, nark it, stoppo.
That's wot the whizz mob are saying,
Take yer fork from his outer, he's pipeing.
If yer banged then yer in fer a stripeing.

The fourpenny snore & the sweeny.
Dwell in the box for you.
So nitto, nark it, stoppo.
Or a carpets a lay-down for you.

Frank Norman

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FILM

The Cinema and the Passage of Time

Albert Dasnoy

IT WAS in 1925, as René Clair reminds us in one of his writings, that the cinema looked back for the first time at its past. It happened quite by chance: the mere whim of a projectionist, a joke intended to amuse the public. But the event at once took on quite serious proportions. Old films were, at that time, just so much unsaleable junk. Nobody would have dreamt that they might still be of any interest at all. Then, one day, someone thought of running through a few pre-war films just for fun, in a Paris studio. It was an enormous success, an astounding and hilarious success. For the long-forgotten films turned out, at a second viewing, to be much more disconcerting than anyone had anticipated.

This experiment was to have extraordinary consequences. In the productions hitherto so completely forgotten, an abundant and choice food for curiosity had been found. Moreover, having merrily relished the absurdities of these old films with their awkwardness and their artlessness, the public soon discovered in them both interest and charm. It was an ambiguous charm, compounded of out-dated techniques, radical changes of taste, and the surprise effect of the reappearance of the past in all its crudeness. At all events, the show was pronounced fascinating. It started a craze. Studio after studio began to specialise in reviving old films.

If this craze has diminished, it is by no means dead. Even to-day, to see a pre-Great War film is one of the most titillating of aesthetic experiences. But during the years immediately following 1925, the revival of old films gradually acquired a more and more serious significance. The cinema was shaking itself free of the confusions and misapprehensions of the earliest days. As its prestige grew, its past efforts became more appreciated and began to be studied more seriously. The "old-time film" which was "good for a laugh" was replaced by the "early film" to be enjoyed for its own sake because it was good. The cinema, in short, was gradually achieving that simultaneous existence in the present and the past which is proper to the arts. When it had finally become accepted as a true art, its great classical works were revived regularly, as in the theatre.

Yet not so regularly, nor in quite the same spirit. The revival of old films, even the classics, arouses in us a very special sort of reaction. There is always an element of surprise.

I can well remember what impressed us most strongly in those memorable performances, the first revivals of the cinema. Many of the films we were shown, we had already seen ten or fifteen years earlier. Our memory of them was all the more vivid in that our imagination at that time was not saturated as it is to-day. But when we saw them again, they seemed to us almost unrecognisable. It was as if someone had tampered with them. We began to believe that we were watching a parody of what we had seen before.

This rapid transformation of a film in the memory no longer strikes us to-day so forcibly as on that first occasion when we were given the opportunity to experience it. Now, we are forewarned. But, nevertheless, it is just this that so curiously stimulates our attention in film revivals. We find a strange attraction in seeing our favourite films again after a lapse of five or ten years—to see, as we say, what time has made of them. Really we are finding out what time has made of us in the interval.

IT IS this disturbing experience of our inner metamorphosis that the cinema excels in producing for us. An old film reveals arrestingly, in a flash, evolution of which we are only very confusedly aware. No doubt we are always more

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or less occupied in readjusting our judgments on art, and so become aware of a hidden progress in our sensitivity or our taste. But the cinema seems to be endowed in this respect with peculiarly strong and effective powers of revelation. For films recede into the past with a rapidity peculiar to them, and for a multiplicity of reasons.

In the first place because of the nature of their memorableness. The ordinary spectator's recollection of a film is usually intense rather than clear. The cinema, art of movement and action, leaves with us a curiously blurred memory, lacking in objective fixity. We must reckon with the state of nervous effervescence into which it nearly always plunges us. The speed of the modern film, the passions it stirs up in us, the violent shocks it administers freely to our imagination and our emotions, all contribute to an eminently unstable mental picture, liable to profound modification in the dynamism of the memory; a mental picture which cannot fail to disconcert us when we are confronted with the reality.

As the art of movement, too, the cinema is itself in constant motion. It is subjected in its nature, in its processes, and in its status to a continuous and rapid transformation, taking us with it through a continuous and rapid series of changes of viewpoint. Each time that we see a film again, if the requisite period of time has elapsed, it seems to have undergone some alteration, for we approach it with a new eye and a differently disposed sensibility. Here a new element is added to the vagaries of our memory: to wit, the surprising alacrity with which we accept and even surrender to the latest technical and dramatic innovations in the cinema. Never before has any art moulded sensibility with such active vigour; never before has any art been able to exercise upon our mind such a sustained influence—to subject it, as it were, to such a concentrated and intensive training.

The art of the film, in short, is evolving so rapidly, and the hold which the new perspective has upon us at every successive stage is so powerful, that we very quickly lose sight of even those films which have made the greatest impression on us; and when we see them again we are at a loss. In other words, the cinema provides an example of evolution in a nutshell, it accelerates this aesthetic process.

And there it lays a finger on one of our most sensitive spots, and encounters one of the cultural and psychological peculiarities of our time. For men to-day, or those at least to whom such things matter, are tremendously interested in just this mysterious and unpredictable effect of the hand of time upon the appreciation of beauty. This is a fairly recent preoccupation. Formerly, people's judgment was more assured. What they liked or disapproved of in matters of art or taste seemed to them to be assured of permanent fame or oblivion. They knew, no doubt, that no one can flatter himself that he is entirely immune from the illusions of his time; but they confided their mistakes to the judgment of posterity as to an infallible and sovereign tribunal. The judgment of posterity was the supreme test. And each man moreover expected it to confirm him in his beliefs.

In us, this robust confidence is present to a much lesser degree. There is something reticent and even sly about our professions of faith. The future, to our fathers an imperturbable witness, has lost much of its majesty. In actual experience, time's handiwork has proved to be strangely malicious and we prefer to be the accomplices rather than the dupes of this malice. During the past fifty years we have seen so many revolutions and counter-revolutions in taste, so many works have passed from oblivion to fame and from fame to oblivion, that now all our judgments have reservations and a sort of expectancy. The most ridiculed styles and fashions, the most discredited aesthetic theories return after twenty or thirty years to the light of day, to be welcomed by us as first of all interesting and then fascinating. What one generation will discard in disgust as old-fashioned, the next will discover with delight in the antique shops. In matters of taste we can no longer commit ourselves at all. We are not prepared to swear that what we fervently admired in our youth will not disappoint us in our riper years, and that what at one time we disdained will not, when the time comes, reveal attractions that we could not then discern. We are not even sure that what to-day seems quite ordinary and ugly will not one day acquire a certain beauty or at least poetry, and moreover we cannot disentangle the part played in these strange revulsions by perversions of taste, sentimentality, or just reparation.

This reserve extends to the whole realm of art and taste, whether it be our grandparents' furniture, current fashions, or the paintings of Picasso. It may not be correct to compare controversies involving the noble contestants of art with the happenings in the world of fashion and furnishing. But we have introduced the same relativity and the same perplexities to both, judging by one of our most frequent reactions to the daring ventures of modern painting: "What a pity," we say to ourselves, "that we can't know what people will think of this in fifty or a hundred years' time!"

What is the significance of this dream of anticipating the opinions of the future?

Certainly we want to dissociate ourselves in

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some way from the prejudices of our time and to gain a true perspective. But in our eyes posterity is no longer a judge. Its opinion will no doubt be different from ours, and we would give a great deal to know what it will be, but not so that we can accept it as a superior judgment. Quite simply, the perspective will have changed, and everything will be seen in a different light. What urges us to investigate the future is rather a virulent curiosity as to the numerous and varied aspects which will be assumed by all that interests us to-day. Time seems to us to be less a dispenser of justice than a revealer of secrets.

Now it is this yearning to know the secrets of time that is to some extent satisfied by the cinema.

HOWEVER fascinating revivals in the cinema may still be for us, they will never again make the violent impression that they made on their first release thirty odd years ago. Then they were in fact a revelation of twenty-five years of completely forgotten production. Moreover, those twenty-five years constituted a privileged period, a period of ingenuity, now forever ended by the new consciousness. For after this first glimpse of the past, a spell had been broken, the history of the cinema had been born, soon to develop its own intimidating analytical and critical apparatus.

As has been said, most of the old out-moded films which we saw then seemed at first incredibly funny, even ridiculous, as nothing till then had been ridiculous. In the tentative gropings of an art so completely lacking in experience and tradition, unaware as yet of its limitations or of its possibilities, all sorts of misconceptions and incongruities had crept in. For example, since the cinema was silent, certain directors thought it necessary to replace every word by an equivalent mime, obvious and emphatic enough for the public to run no risk of misunderstanding. If I remember rightly, it was in the Italian cinema that this practice produced the most bizarre results. Others made up for the silence of the actors by a slowness and insistence intended to give the spectator time to guess what was being said. The camera men had at that time no idea of the economy of means possible to facial expression, nor of the quick receptiveness that could be expected. It must be admitted, too, that this quick reaction of ours is the result of hard practice and training. It did not exist forty years ago. The spectators of that period would have understood nothing of our films—rapid, allusive, and elliptical. But this education once acquired, as it was within a generation, the slowness of the old films makes us laugh, for it no longer corresponds to any of our habits or to any necessity.

To the clumsiness of an art in its infancy were added the extravagances of fashion and the eccentricities of taste. The cinema was recreating the past with an attention to trivialities hitherto spared to human perception. This too was a new experience, one that had been initiated by photography.

Until the advent of photography, a man could only form a picture of his past by an effort of mind. Its elements were supplied by art, memory, or imagination, each adding its transcendence or its indulgence. But photography makes no allowances. The images it captures do not pass through the heart or the mind, but through an automatic mechanism. They evoke the past with a pitiless exactitude to which sensitive imaginations, too used by now to the gentle rule of art, were unwilling to capitulate. It seemed to them that an evil spirit had intruded, belittling a beloved reality and holding it up to ridicule. From these merciless pictures emanated a pathos and a comic quality of a kind as yet unknown, and not willingly accepted as entirely true.

And, besides, for a long time these photographs of the past had been seen only in private. They were shown in semi-confidence, in family albums. But it was just at this time, round about 1925, that a great interest was aroused in the old photographs of Edwardian and Victorian days. Editors published collections of them with ironical comments and they were gleefully welcomed by an avid public. It was a revelation; they brought brutally into focus a whole period which had for long been nurtured in our imagination by the books of Flaubert and Thackeray, Anatole France and Galsworthy. True, they revealed further that photography, despite its mechanical processes, could have a style of its own, developing over the years and bearing the mark of each period; that time's magic can still transform reality even thus cruelly exposed; and that very old photographs of the last century move us more and in another way than those of more recent date. They have a charm and dignity which is gradually lost among the platitudes of the merely old-fashioned. But something old-fashioned is much more out of date than something really old, and the old films we saw in 1925 took us back just this most unflattering distance in time.

LET it be said in passing that the cinema knew how to profit by its lessons. The taste for the good old days was implanted in the mind of the public. It opened up for cinema directors a vein that they were to exploit to the full. But this alluring archaism of the directors was much less interesting than the incomparably more authentic and pithy archaism of Fantomas, of

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the first Charlie Chaplin films, or of Griffith. For this was indeed archaism. What in short surprised us most in the production of only fifteen or twenty years before was its precocious archaism. It seemed to have the mark of obsolescence out of all proportion to its actual age. The recent past to which it belonged seemed in the perspective of the cinema to have retreated with surprising rapidity.

Such a speedy obsolescence could not be explained away by the vagaries of fashion and of taste, nor by the inexperience of the cameraman or director, nor by the crude playing of the actors. Another factor had intervened, which has not generally to be reckoned with in art: the rapid transformation of the technical equipment.

In the traditional arts, by which till then our sensibility had been formed, the tools themselves play an insignificant part. They have remained almost unchanged since ancient times. Painting and sculpture arose from primary activity and improvised their very modest implements. Even architecture, up till the beginning of this century, consisted essentially in laying stone upon stone. The cinema, on the contrary, arose from the discovery of ingenious and complex instruments, and its whole evolution was to be conditioned by their development. It makes use of a considerable and complex machinery, involving the co-operation of all branches of industry. Thus the cinema has not developed only or even mainly in accordance with the innate needs of its artistic function. It is affected in its very vitals by what is happening in fields of human activity entirely foreign to it and obeying quite different imperatives.

Of the improvements by which the cinema has benefited, many assuredly fulfil the wants of the cinema directors. Others, and perhaps the most considerable, are imposed upon it by the effects of a technique developing on its own account and confusing the perfection of the art with the perfection of the medium. Thus the cinema has been blessed in turn with all the resources of lighting, sound, and later colour, and now with three dimensions—all advances tending towards a splendid objectivity, and only artists, alas, realise that this is not its real goal. It is certain that the admirable style of expression which was worked out in the silent cinema was arrested in mid-career by the avalanche of new processes. "Happy the days," said a director to me once, "when painters had several centuries to realise what oil-colours meant to them."

But I am not concerned with the happiness of directors. What I wanted to make clear was that the rapid advance of cinematographic apparatus and techniques imposed upon the whole of the production such a rapidly ageing process that the films made at the beginning of the century stand in the same relation to the creators of to-day as did the romanesque frescoes to the painters of the 19th century.

Thus the first revivals in the cinema, by bringing to light again a still quite recent period, and one that we had known in our own lifetime, already discovered in it the pungent flavour of archaism. One can understand the excitement of a public unexpectedly confronted with such a strange phenomenon.

NEVERTHELESS, after the first shock of surprise, this same public became aware that many of the films which had at first seemed merely ridiculous were perhaps not so ridiculous after all, and that to laugh at the contrast between them and more recent productions was not enough. Some thoughtful minds went even further. They discovered that in its pristine freshness the cinema, despite its wonderful progress, had had a tone, a wealth of invention, a poetic candour that rapidly faded and are to-day lost.

Is it not astonishing that the cinema, the art of modern times, born of mechanical progress into a society steeped in rationalism and science, should have known an authentic primitive period, such as all other arts had long since outgrown? But this is indeed the case. Going back beyond the old films which entertained the public in 1925, we find real primitives in men like Méliès and Lumière: here was a rudimentary art on which candid intentions and extreme simplicity of means conferred an amazing poetic power.

There are some interesting notes to be made in this connection on the sources and conditions of simplicity. How, one may ask, was the cinema able to take to itself the privilege of an artlessness which apparently no longer existed in contemporary society? And is it not just as surprising that the cinema should have traversed in fifty years the great distance separating this genuine primitive state from the senile decay into which Hollywood has fallen to-day?

"In 1950 we can already say," René Clair once observed, "that old films become flashbacks to forgotten secrets." A nostalgic, disillusioned reflection that has much in common with the thoughts of a group of English painters, the future Pre-Raphaelites, when they stood before the charming, candid frescoes at Orcagna. But the frescoes were six hundred years old. It is more surprising that we can speak of the "forgotten secrets" of an art born within living memory and before our very eyes; that we can speak so regretfully, as if the secrets were lost for ever, and the loss were irreparable, despite

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the wonders the cinema has performed since then, and the wonders still to come.

CONSIDERED from the point of view of the psychological reaction it has provoked, the cinema epitomises in its short career the whole history of the traditional arts, written down the centuries. It has had time to be born, to be forgotten, and to be rediscovered with unutterable surprise; to take pity on its early beginnings as the Renaissance took pity on Gothic painting, then to rehabilitate them as the 19th century rehabilitated the same painting, and to dream of the irrevocable virtues of its past. It has known all the states of consciousness, from the innocence of unsophisticated art to the pessimism of an art over-reached by its own virtuosity.

The fact that this evolution has taken place within a lifetime makes the experience singularly disturbing for those of us who have lived through it from the beginning. It is the history of our own sensibility that is written there. The artlessness of the first films was our artlessness; and the distance separating it from present-day productions in the cinema is one of the measures of our existence.

Our generation was all the more able to realise the significance of this aesthetic event in that it took us unawares. Nothing had prepared us for such a shock. We were emerging from a world still dedicated to lengthy elaboration and century-long maturing; and to this deliberateness the culture inculcated in us in our youth remained intensely loyal. Even exaggeratedly loyal, to judge by our reluctance to accept the revolutions in painting at this time. That is why the experience we were privileged to undergo in 1925 remains unique. The new generations, for whom the cinema will have been, in artistic matters, the first educative influence, will no longer be able to experience that same astonishment.

John Fuller

Band Music

Cows! Cows! With ears like mouths of telephones!
They creak towards him with their heads thrust out,
So baby wauls among the cabbages
Till Betty runs to kiss his quivering pout
And lumping Ernest takes a stick and stones
To drive them off, cursing their ravages.

"Hush, child," she whispers, rocking. "There, there then!
Watch Ernest. Clever Ernest. Nasty cows."
Inside the cottage from a dusty box
Thumps martial music. Flowers on Betty's blouse
Grow out in lines like cabbages while men
In gold braid blow among the hollyhocks.

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Henry Reed

The Auction Sale

Within the great grey flapping tent
The damp crowd stood or stamped about;
And some came in, and some went out
To drink the moist November air;
None fainted, though a few looked spent
And eyed some empty unbought chair.
It was getting on. And all had meant
Not to go home with empty hands
But full of gain, at little cost,
Of mirror, vase, or vinaigrette.
Yet often, after certain sales,
Some looked relieved that they had lost,
Others, at having won, upset.
Two men from London sat apart,
Both from the rest and each from each,
One man in grey and one in brown.
And each ignored the other's face,
And both ignored the endless stream
Of bed and bedside cabinet,
Gazing intent upon the floor,
And they were strangers in that place.

Two other men, competing now,
Locals, whom everybody knew,
In shilling genially strove
For some small thing in ormolu.
Neither was eager; one looked down
Blankly at eighty-four, and then
Rallied again at eighty-eight,
And took it off at four pounds ten.
The loser grimly shook his fist,
But friendly, there was nothing meant.
Little gained was little missed,
And there was smiling in the tent.

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The auctioneer paused to drink,
And wiped his lips and looked about,
Engaged in whispered colloquy
The clerk, who frowned and seemed to think,
And murmured: "Why not do it next?"
The auctioneer, though full of doubt,
Unacquiescent, rather vexed,
At last agreed, and at his sign
Two ministrants came softly forth
And lifted in an ashen shroud
Something extremely carefully packed,
Which might have been some sort of frame,
And was a picture-frame in fact.
They steadied it gently and with care,
And held it covered, standing there.

The auctioneer again looked round
And smiled uneasily at friends,
And said: "Well, friends, I have to say
Something I have not said to-day:
There's a reserve upon this number.
It is a picture which though unsigned
Is thought to be of the superior kind,
So I am sure you gentlemen will not mind
If I tell you at once before we start
That what I have been asked to say
Is, as I have said, to say:
There's a reserve upon this number."
There was a rustle in that place,
And some awoke as though from slumber.
Anxious disturbance fluttered there;
And as if summoned to begin,
Those who had stepped outside for air
Retrieved themselves and stepped back in.

The ministrants, two local boys,
Experienced in this sort of work,
And careful not to make too much noise,
Reached forward to unhook the shroud
Which slowly opening fell away
And on the public gaze released
The prospect of a great gold frame
That through the reluctant leaden air
Flashed a mature unsullied grace
Into the faces of the crowd.
And there was silence in that place.

Effulgent in the Paduan air,
Ardent to yield the Venus lay
Naked upon the sunwarmed earth.
Bronze and bright and crisp her hair,
By the right hand of Mars caressed,
Who sunk beside her on his knee,
His mouth towards her mouth inclined,
His left hand near her silken breast.
Flowers about them sprang and twined,

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Accomplished Cupids leaped and sported,
And three, with dimpled arms enlaced
And brimming gaze of stifled mirth,
Looked wisely on at Mars's nape,
While others played with horns and pikes,
Or smaller objects of like shape.

And there was silence in the tent.
They gazed in silence; silently
The wind dropped down, no longer shook
The flapping sides and gaping holes.
And some moved back, and others went
Closer, to get a better look.

In ritual, amorous delay,
Venus deposed her sheltering hand
Where her bright belly's aureate day
Melted to dusk about her groin;
And, as from words that Mars had said
Into that hidden, subtle ear,
She turned away her shining head.

The auctioneer cleared his throat,
And said: "I am sure I'm right in feeling
You will not feel it at all unfair
For what when all is said and done
Is a work of very artistic painting
And not to be classed with common lumber
And anyway extremely rare,
You will not feel it at all unfair
If I mention again before proceeding,
There's a reserve upon this number."
Someone was heard to say with meaning:
"What, did I hear him say *reserve?*"
(Meaning, of course, a different meaning.)
This was a man from Sturminster,
Renowned for a quiet sense of fun,
And there was laughter in that place,
Though, not, of course, from everyone.

A calm and gentle mile away,
Among the trees a river ran
Boated with blue and scarlet sails;
A towered auburn city stood
Beyond them on the burnished heights,
And afar off and over all
The azure day for mile on mile
Unrolled towards the Dolomites.

The auctioneer said:
"I very much fear I have to say
I'm afraid we cannot look all day.
The reserve is seven hundred pounds.
Will anyone offer me seven fifty?
Seven thirty? Twenty-five?

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Thank you, sir. Seven twenty-five."
It was the man in brown who nodded,
Soon to be joined by him in grey.
The bidding started quietly.
No one from locally joined in.
Left to the men from London way,
The auctioneer took proper pride,
And knew the proper way to guide
By pause, by silence, and by tapping,
The bidding towards a proper price.
And each of the two with unmoved face
Would nod and pause and nod and wait.
And there was tension in that place.

And still within the Paduan field,
The silent summer scene stood by,
The sails, the hill-tops, and the sky,
And the bright warmth of Venus' glance
That had for centuries caught the eye
Of whosoever looked that way,
And now caught theirs, on this far day.

Two people only did not look.
They were the men so calmly nodding,
Intently staring at the floor;
Though one of them, the one in brown,
Would sometimes slowly lift his gaze
And stare up towards the canvas roof,
Whereat a few men standing near
Inquiring eyes would also raise
To try to see what he was seeing.
The bidding mounted steadily
With silent nod or murmured yes
And passed the fifteen hundred mark,
And well beyond, and far beyond,
A nodding strife without success,
Till suddenly, with one soft word,
Something unusual occurred.

The auctioneer had asked politely,
With querying look and quiet smile:
"Come then, may I say two thousand?"
There was the customary pause,
When suddenly with one soft word,
Another voice was strangely heard
To join in, saying plainly: "Yes."
Not their voices, but a third.
Everyone turned in some surprise
To look, and see, and recognise
A young man who some time ago
Had taken a farm out Stalbridge way,
A very pleasant young man, but quiet,
Though always a friendly word to say,
Though no one in the dealing line,

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But quiet and rather unsuccessful,
And often seen about the place
At outings or on market-day,
And very polite and inoffensive,
And quiet, as anyone would tell you,
But not from round here in any case.

The auctioneer, in some surprise,
Said: "Please, sir, did I hear you say
Yes to two thousand? Is that bid?
Twenty hundred am I bid?"
The two were silent, and the third,
The young man, answered plainly: "Yes.
Yes. Two thousand. Yes, I did."
Meaning that he had said that word.
"Ah, yes. Yes, thank you, sir," concurred
The auctioneer, surprised, but glad
To know that he had rightly heard,
And added: "Well, then, I may proceed.
I am bid two thousand for this picture.
Any advance upon that sum?
Any advance upon two thousand?
May I say two thousand twenty?
Twenty? Thirty? Thank you, sir.
May I say forty? Thank you, sir.
Fifty? You, sir? Thank you, sir."

And now instead of two, the three
Competed in the bargaining.
There was amazement in that place,
But still it gave, as someone said,
A sort of interest to the thing.
The young man nodded with the others,
And it was seen his nice young face,
Had lost its flush and now was white,
And those who stood quite near to him
Said (later, of course, they did not speak
While the bidding was going on)
That on his brow were beads of sweat,
Which as he nodded in acceptance
Would, one or two, fall down his cheek.

And in the tightening atmosphere
Naked upon the sunwarmed earth
Pauses were made and eyebrows raised,
Answered at last by further nods,
Ardent to yield the nods resumed
Venus upon the sunwarmed nods
Abandoned Cupids danced and nodded
His mouth towards her bid four thousand
Four thousand, any advance upon,
And still beyond four thousand fifty
Unrolled towards the nodding *sun.*

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But it was seen, and very quickly,
That after four thousand twenty-five,
The man from over Stalbridge way
Did not respond, and from that point
He kept his silent gaze averted,
To show he would not speak again.
And it was seen his sweating face,
Which had been white, was glowing red,
And had a look almost of pain.

Oh hand of Venus, hand of Mars,
Oh ardent mouth, oh burnished height,
Oh blue and scarlet gentle sails,
Oh Cupids smiling in the dance,
Oh unforgotten, living glance,
Oh river, hill and flowering plain,
Oh ever-living dying light.

And had a look almost of pain.
The rest was quickly done. The bids
Advanced at slowly slackening pace
Up to four thousand sixty-five.
And at this point the man in grey
Declined his gaze upon the floor
And kept it there, as though to say
That he would bid no more that day.
It was quite clear he had not won,
This man in grey, though anyone
Practised to read the human face
Might on his losing mouth descry
What could no doubt be termed a smile.
While on the face of him in brown
A like expertness might discern
Something that could be termed a frown.

There was a little faint applause.

The auctioneer sighed with joy,
The customary formalities
Were quickly over, and the strangers
Nodding a brief good-bye departed.
Venus and Mars were carefully veiled.
The auctioneer went on and proffered
Cupboard, table, chair and tray.
Bids of a modest kind were offered,
The traffic of a normal day.
A little later it was seen
The young man too had slipped away.
Which was, of course, to be expected.
Possibly there was nothing else
There at the sale to take his fancy.
Or possibly he even might
Be feeling ashamed at intervening,

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Though possibly not, for after all,
He had certainly been within his right.

At all events, a hour later,
Along the Stalbridge Road a child
Saw the young man and told her mother,
Though not in fact till some days after,
That she had seen him in the dusk,
Not walking on the road at all,
But striding beneath the sodden trees;
And as she neared she saw that he
Had no covering on his head,
And did not seem to see her pass,
But went on, through the soaking grass,
Crying: that was what she said.

Bitterly, she later added.

Crying bitterly, she said.

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Richard Lowenthal

Tito's Gamble

The winning horse failed to pay off

"I DO not think the new conflict with the Soviet Communists has been a disappointment to our Party or to our people—only to some of our leaders." The words were said with a smile, but the underlying bitterness was unmistakable. The speaker, a Yugoslav Communist with considerable international experience, clearly belonged to those who were relieved rather than surprised when the new break came. I met many of them during my latest visit to Yugoslavia in July, and one of my most striking impressions was the frankness with which they voiced their criticism of some of the policies pursued by President Tito during the period of the abortive reconciliation with the Soviet Union, or at least during its later part—roughly from September, 1956, to October, 1957.

Lest this be misunderstood, let me hasten to explain that my informants were loyal Communist Party members and firm believers in a posture of "non-alignment" in the cold war. (Indeed, I doubt whether even a non-Communist government in Yugoslavia, provided it cared to maintain the unity and independence of the country, could adopt a different posture.) None of them had ever feared that President Tito could be moved to join the Soviet military bloc, or submit once again to the discipline of a resurrected Cominform under Soviet or Soviet-Chinese leadership. None of them was in the least worried that there could be any serious opposition within the Party to its renewed stand for political and ideological autonomy. What they did convey, one by one, was a sense of having emerged from a dangerous adventure which had needlessly damaged the international position of their country, one that had exposed both the Party in general and each of them personally to intense strain. And, openly or by implication, they put the blame for this adventure on Tito himself.

Their criticism was not, of course, directed against the "normalisation" of relations with the Soviet Union, as originally begun after Stalin's death. That, on the contrary, they recognised as a precondition for securing the advantages of a non-aligned position in world affairs. The adventure, in their view, was the later attempt to influence the trend of overall Soviet policy—domestic as well as external—during its post-Stalin period of flux by "keeping in" with Khrushchev, backing him in his internal struggle for power and seeking to furnish him political trumps even at the expense of Yugoslavia's immediate national interests. It was this gamble for high stakes that for more than a year seriously divided the Yugoslav Communist leaders behind their façade of outward unanimity, and it is its final failure that has brought the hidden tension to the surface. For nobody in Belgrade doubts that the failure is final, or that the whole policy was based on a miscalculation of the mainsprings of Khrushchev's actions where questions of Soviet bloc discipline and inter-Communist relations are concerned.

Nobody in Belgrade any longer believes that Khrushchev has been forced against his will to adopt this policy—either by a mysterious "Stalinist" opposition in the party presidium, or even by Mao Tse-tung. Of course, the Yugoslavs are well aware that Peking has in recent months exerted its influence to increase the violence and viciousness of the new Soviet campaign against them, just as it seems to use its influence to try and push Soviet foreign policy in general in the direction of over confidence and bomb-rattling threats. But the Yugoslavs do not jump to the silly conclusion that because China, the economically and militarily dependent partner, is throwing its weight about and rocking the boat of Soviet diplomacy, it has assumed the political and ideological leadership of the Communist world; nor can they believe that China suddenly, in the spring of 1958, forced a Soviet-Yugoslav

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break which Khrushchev himself had announced to them as impending in November, 1957, during the 40th anniversary celebrations of the Bolshevik seizure of power!

The "problem" of why Khrushchev excommunicated the Yugoslavs, which has caused so much speculation in the West, does not exercise the minds of the Yugoslav Communists. They realised the failure of their courtship of Khrushchev last October, when he sent them the draft of the declaration that was to be signed in Moscow, and that later *was* signed by all ruling Communist parties *except* the Yugoslavs. The essence of that declaration, with its attribution of all the troubles of the world to the "imperialist warmongers," its emphasis on the need to strengthen the Warsaw Pact, and its declaration of war on ideological "revisionism," was that nobody could be a good Communist who did not join the Soviet military bloc and accept the Soviet concept of ideological orthodoxy. It was, in fact, at the very moment when Khrushchev, with the elimination of Marshal Zhukov from the army leadership and the party presidium, finally achieved complete and undisputed dictatorial power at home that the Yugoslavs had to abandon the illusion of their influence on him. Just when the horse they had backed all along had won the race, they discovered that they would not be paid off after all!

Or perhaps I should say that Tito, Rankovic, and a few other leaders discovered it, for many other Yugoslav Communists had suspected it long before. Because of that, the final failure of the gamble has for the first time seriously impaired—though not, of course, destroyed—Tito's personal authority within his party. This has had a number of curious consequences. One has been the extremely unpleasant tendency of the political police to increase the harassment of critics and suspected critics *after* the break with Russia—and I am not talking of pro-Soviet critics. Another has been the extreme official reticence about the secret history of the period of rapprochement, even though Khrushchev has deliberately taunted the Yugoslavs by "disclosing" selected half-truths in his speeches. But thirdly, and partly nullifying that official reticence, there has been the willingness of responsible critics to hint at vital, hitherto undisclosed facts—facts which allow, I believe, a tentative reconstruction of that secret history, and in particular of the rôle which the Yugoslav attitude to Hungary—before, during and after the revolution—played in it.

In one of his recent speeches, Khrushchev claimed that he had at no time placed all the blame for Stalin's 1948 break with Yugoslavia on Russia's account: he had always told the Yugoslav leaders that, in his view, both sides had made mistakes, but they had not dared to pass this on to their Party. The facts behind this claim are intriguing. It appears that Khrushchev's 1955 visit to Belgrade was preceded by a preparatory correspondence between the Soviet and Yugoslav Central Committees, extending over several months, and that in the course of these exchanges Khrushchev indeed proposed that each side should accept part of the responsibility for the past conflict: the Soviets would blame their share on Beria, and the Yugoslavs should blame theirs on Djilas (who by then had already been expelled from the party). This brilliant proposal was not, of course, kept secret by Tito; it was put before a meeting of the Yugoslav Central Committee late in 1954, and was turned down at his own suggestion. (As one critic put it, "Tito would not be such a fool as to give Djilas all the credit for the struggle for national independence.") Tito's famous scowl when Khrushchev publicly dished out the Beria story on arrival at Belgrade airport was thus due to a realisation that Khrushchev intended to stick to a formula which Tito had already rejected. No agreement seems to have been reached on this point during the Belgrade discussions, which was one of the reasons why the joint declaration that finally emerged was signed on behalf of the governments rather than the Parties; and when Khrushchev defended his action against Molotov's criticism before the Soviet Central Committee on his return, he still maintained internally—as he has since stated publicly—that the first Cominform resolution of 1948 which excommunicated the Yugoslav party was "basically correct."

Nevertheless, the Yugoslavs were highly satisfied with the result of the visit. By confining the first stage of the public rapprochement to the sphere of state relations, they had succeeded in establishing their right to sovereign equality and independence before accepting Party ties. The fact of the visit and of their treatment as brother-Marxists had the moral effect of a unilateral admission of Stalin's fault, whatever the formula; and the Soviet acceptance of the right of each country to determine its own road to socialism, though it might mean less in Khrushchev's mind than in Tito's, was bound to encourage all those Communists in the satellite countries who wished to get out of the Stalinist mire and to learn from the Yugoslav example, whether the Russians liked it or not. Yet the very extent of the new possibilities opened by their success faced them with a new problem.

Even before Khrushchev's visit to Belgrade, the beginning devaluation of Stalin had combined with the loosening of Soviet police supervision in the satellites, and with the first moves

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towards a normalisation of Soviet-Yugoslav relations, to cause new hopeful stirrings among the surviving victims of Stalin's "anti-Titoist" purges in Eastern Europe. Watching these developments with keen interest, the Yugoslavs had come to the conclusion that nowhere were they more promising than in neighbouring Hungary. There, a surviving advocate of a policy of internal autonomy and popular reform, Imre Nagy, had actually come with Soviet consent to hold office as Prime Minister—though not power as Party leader—since the summer of 1953, and had followed the Yugoslav example in permitting the peasants to leave the collective farms. And when by the winter of 1954–5 the counter-offensive of the old Stalinist leadership around Rakosi led to bitter disputes in the Hungarian Central Committee, the Yugoslavs were optimistic about the outcome and about Nagy's eventual chances by further reforms to win a broader mass basis for an independent Communist régime. Even when Nagy was overthrown by the "old guard" in March 1955, apparently as a by-product of Malenkov's fall and the campaign for the primacy of heavy industry in Russia, the Yugoslavs were inclined to regard this as a mere temporary setback to the forces of progress, just as Nagy himself continued to prepare memoranda defending his policy for the Hungarian Central Committee and the Soviet leaders.

Nor was Yugoslav interest in developments among the Hungarian Communists purely ideological. For years, their own hardly-won independence had been perilously similar to isolation; and while Russia's new emphasis on peaceful coexistence encouraged them to proclaim the ambitious goal of an ultimate dissolution of the two hostile military blocs in world affairs, their practical diplomacy patiently pursued the more modest aim of extending the area of bloc-free nations, and preferably creating a belt of neutral territory in their neighbourhood. For that reason, Khrushchev's agreement to sign at last the "State Treaty" which guaranteed the withdrawal of both Russia and the Western powers from a neutral Austria was to the Yugoslavs a vital proof of his good will, far outweighing any awkward remnants of doctrinaire rigidity he might show. It owed its special importance in their minds to the hope that eventually an independent Communist Hungary might also become neutral with Russian consent. We know today, from Imre Nagy's papers, that by the beginning of 1956 he, too, had committed himself to the vision of close Yugoslav-Hungaro-Austrian co-operation on the basis of neutrality; and though by that time he had been expelled from Rakosi's party (and the fact that he held these views and communicated them to the Yugoslavs has since figured in its indictment for treason), the Rakosi régime was so obviously unstable that the Yugoslavs could well count on his eventual comeback. Not for nothing had the rehabilitation of Laszlo Rajk—executed in 1949 for alleged treasonable co-operation with Yugoslavia—and the dropping of Rakosi been the only specific changes in satellite policy which Tito urged on Khrushchev from the start; and he obtained the former in April 1956—after the disavowal of Stalin at the Soviet party congress—and the latter in July of the same year, after his own triumphant journey through Russia.

YET Khrushchev, in fact, never intended to permit Hungarian neutrality, or even full political autonomy in internal affairs. When he finally sacrificed Rakosi because the pressure had become too strong and the discredit brought on the régime by Rakosi's known share in Stalin's crimes too intolerable, he appointed as successor not Nagy but Ernoe Geroe, who had been Rakosi's closest associate throughout. Moreover, warned by the Poznan rising and by the outburst of free discussion in both Poland and Hungary that "destalinisation" might easily go far beyond his intentions, and worried about Yugoslav moral backing for "anti-Stalinists" in the satellite countries, Khrushchev now faced Tito with a demand that he should switch his support to Geroe in the interests of stability: otherwise, his own new course in Russia might be in danger from "Stalinist reaction." At that time, such a danger was not wholly fictitious: the pro-Stalin riots in Georgia which followed circulation of the "secret speech" in the spring had not been confined to Tiflis, and some of the demonstrators had called for Molotov, then still a member of the party presidium and a first deputy premier of the Soviet Union.

This, then, was the decision confronting Tito: whether to continue backing his anti-Stalinist friends in the satellites and above all in Hungary, at the risk of incurring Khrushchev's displeasure and possibly weakening the "progressive" elements in the Soviet party presidium—or whether to abandon his real friends in order to keep Khrushchev's confidence and perhaps help keep him in power. Some might have viewed it as a decision between ideological and moral principle and cautious opportunism; from another angle, it implied a choice between the regional interests of an independent Yugoslavia, which had inspired the backing of Nagy, and the dream of influencing Soviet policy from outside. In fact, Tito chose Khrushchev, and invited Geroe to Yugoslavia; though he gained for Nagy readmission to the Party as a consolation prize. The choice was made against the advice of many of his closest colleagues, and of all the Yugoslavs most intimately concerned

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with Hungarian affairs. That was the moment when the adventure began.

At this point, and before going on to the Yugoslav attitude during the crucial days of the Hungarian rising, a word must be said about the alignment within the Yugoslav leadership. The one group that wholeheartedly backed Tito's bid for Khrushchev's friendship were those conservative party bureaucrats who had long been uneasy about Yugoslavia's own "unorthodox" reforms, especially since Djilas' evolution had shown how easily these reforms, if pursued consistently, might become a threat to the Party's power. These people were as good Yugoslav patriots, as determined to defend their country's independence against all comers, as Tito himself; but because they hoped that better relations with Russia would stop the dangerous drift towards "liberalisation" at home, they were only too willing to believe that these better relations could be secured without danger to their independence, simply by talking less about ideological differences. This group was dominant in the Serbian Central Committee; it also included the leading Serb among Tito's Politburo colleagues—Aleksandar Rankovic, creator of the political police and controller of the Party's organisation and personnel. It was, in fact, from about this time that Rankovic came forward as Tito's effective deputy in all Party matters, and began to be discreetly boosted as his designated successor.

Conversely, the leaders opposed to concessions to Khrushchev, and particularly to dealings with Geroe, were the same who had shown most zeal in promoting Yugoslavia's internal reforms, from the workers' councils to the dissolution of Soviet-style *kolkhozes*, and from the planned market economy to the growth of organs of decentralised self-government. These people did not belittle the importance of the process of social change that had started in post-Stalinist Russia, but they refused to regard it as dependent primarily on Khrushchev's influence, or to believe that Yugoslav efforts to support him could have a decisive effect on the broad trend of Russian development. In their view, Yugoslavia could contribute most to that trend by continuing her own experiment and seeking to win increased diplomatic elbow room by support for like-minded elements in neighbouring countries.

Not surprisingly, this group had its main strength among the Slovenian and Croatian leadership—i.e. in the most advanced parts of the country. To them, the vision of closer co-operation with a neutral Hungary and Austria was both historically plausible and politically welcome as a recipe for diluting the retrograde "Balkanic" influences within Yugoslavia, while preserving the unity of the Yugoslav nation. They also enjoyed the warm support of all those younger elements in the party who feared from closer relations with Russia the very thing which the conservative disciplinarians hoped for—an end to reform and experiment, a tightening of control from above, an attempt to shut the windows and to restore the stuffy climate of an orthodoxy they had outgrown during the years when Yugoslavia first discovered the non-Communist world.

Between these groups, the ageing leader was apparently swayed by motives all his own. There is no reason to assume that he shared the preoccupations of the petty bureaucrats, their fear of further reforms and dangerous ideas, but neither was he much concerned to spread the ideology of "Titoism" within a limited regional framework. For years, he had become accustomed to bestride the world stage; now the evolution of post-Stalinist Russia seemed to present him with the chance of a new "historic rôle." Perhaps we in the West have during the past decade come to take Marshal Tito too much for granted as a national leader, and to underestimate the emotional importance of his long years as a professional international revolutionary. However genuinely and successfully he filled his national rôle, the separation from the comrades of his youth must have been a severe psychological strain—and the chance to return into that brotherhood, not defeated and contrite but proudly triumphant, an immense temptation. During his Russian journey in the summer of 1956, when enthusiastic crowds hailed him at every station as the symbol of their own new hopes, that temptation assumed flesh and blood. Russia, and with Russia the whole Communist world, seemed to lie at his feet, willing to follow his road if only he was patient and careful. So when Khrushchev, having failed to obtain Tito's return to the Soviet bloc, sent to the satellite parties a circular warning them against Yugoslav heretical influences, and then offered reconciliation if Tito would shake hands with Geroe, how could he refuse?

Before the Hungarian Party delegation under Geroe came to Yugoslavia, Vlajko Begovic, a member of the Yugoslav Central Committee, had warned in a long report from Budapest that Geroe enjoyed no authority and that events were moving towards a revolution. While the visit was in progress, Gomulka assumed power in Poland and defied Khrushchev's attempt to intervene; the news was enthusiastically received in Hungary. The delegation itself turned out to be divided: Kadar, once a victim of Rakosi and now a member of the Hungarian Politburo, was clearly in favour

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of further changes but Geroe continued to defend his record; and the Yugoslavs, faithful to their agreement with Khrushchev, "did not intervene in Hungarian Party affairs." Directly on his return from Yugoslavia, Geroe made the provocative broadcast which turned a peaceful students' demonstration into a revolt, and during the following night asked for the intervention of Soviet troops which turned the revolt into a rising supported by the bulk of the Hungarian armed forces.

The Yugoslav leaders were naturally shocked by this "Stalinist" behaviour of their supposed protégé, Geroe, and extremely worried about the consequences. When, after a few days, the success of the rising led to the replacement of Geroe by Kadar with Soviet consent, and Nagy took over the government in fact as well as in name, they hoped—as did the Soviet representatives on the spot—that Kadar and Nagy would succeed in stabilising the situation under a reformed Communist régime. But it quickly became clear that the revolutionary movement had gone beyond that stage, that the people and the armed forces were calling for a revival of democratic political parties, a withdrawal of all Soviet troops, and immediate neutrality, and that Nagy was willing to meet these demands. At that point the Soviets lost confidence in Nagy—and so did Tito.

The motives of that decision have been obscured by a flood of lies about the alleged danger of "fascists" and "counter-revolutionaries" getting control of the movement—a fiction which Tito still maintained in his Pula speech. The more honest Yugoslav spokesmen have always said that the crucial argument for the second Soviet intervention was one of power politics rather than ideology. The Soviet leaders had, in fact, never intended to allow a Communist Hungary to leave the Warsaw Pact; they could not possibly permit a non-Communist Hungary to do so in an atmosphere of violent rebellion against Soviet control, and at the moment of the international crisis produced by the Suez expedition. In Soviet language, which the Yugoslavs understood only too well, the term "counter-revolutionary" simply expressed the fact that the movement was no longer in Communist hands, and the fear that a new democratic government would in fact assume a pro-Western orientation whatever its formal neutrality. What was at stake, from the Soviet point of view, was the loss of an important territory to their potential enemies, without compensation and with incalculable repercussions on other members of their bloc, at a moment of high international tension. To prevent that, they were prepared to use force.

The Yugoslav leaders were thrown into a panic. They seriously feared an East-West clash on their borders; most of them also feared that anti-Communist revolution might spread to engulf their own régime. For a day or two, some of them considered the idea of marching in before the Soviets did, to ensure both the survival of Communism and "real" neutrality; at any rate, Yugoslav diplomats sounded Nagy's advisers on how they would react to such a move, but nothing came of it. Instead, *there is now evidence that before their decisive second intervention, the Soviet leaders informed and consulted the Yugoslavs, and that Tito, while disagreeing on some points with the Soviet analysis, gave his advance consent to the crushing of the Hungarian revolution.*

THIS advance consultation is the background to the charge, made in the Kadar government's reply to the Yugoslav protest against Imre Nagy's execution, that "during the night of November 3rd–4th, when the responsible Yugoslav authorities, *on the basis of confidential information received by them*, had learned that at dawn on November 4th the revolutionary worker-peasant government and the Soviet troops would, with joint forces, launch a counter-attack to crush the counter-revolution, Minister Soldatic telephoned the leaders of the Imre Nagy group and, with reference to the expressed request of Belgrade, appealed to them to avail themselves at once to the right of asylum" [my italics]. The reference to confidential information clearly implies something more official than the reports about the approach of returning Soviet forces which were generally known in the Hungarian capital during its last days of freedom.

I was first told about this consultation—by a critical Yugoslav Communist—two weeks before the above hint was published by the Hungarians. According to my informant, it took the form of a flying visit by Khrushchev (straight from Moscow) and Mikoyan (coming from Hungary where he had just got Kadar to abandon Nagy) to Tito at Brioni island on one of the first days of November; the Soviet leaders had by then made up their minds, but were anxious to obtain Yugoslav political support for their action in order to ease Kadar's future work in rebuilding the régime, and to contain anticipated reactions in Poland and other satellites. I am not certain that the details about the flying visit can easily be reconciled with what is otherwise known about Khrushchev's and Mikoyan's timetable in those crowded days, but I am satisfied that Yugoslav advance agreement was solicited in *some* form, and was obtained. Apart from the hint in the Hungarian note, this is confirmed by the immediate Yugoslav reaction to the second Soviet intervention: it was one of com-

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plete approval. This was shown in a circular sent out by the Yugoslav Central Committee on November 5th; in the attitude taken, clearly on instruction from home, by the Yugoslav observer at the Asian Socialist conference then meeting at Rangoon; in the behaviour of the Yugoslav chief delegate to the United Nations, who turned his back when Anna Kethly, the Hungarian Socialist leader, was introduced to him; and not least in the grossly misleading confidential information sent by Tito at the time to Pandit Nehru, which was the principal basis for the unsympathetic attitude initially taken by the Indian leader towards the revolt of the Hungarian people.

It would be unjust to accuse Tito and his team of having betrayed the cause of Hungarian democracy. They are Communists, not democrats, and they cannot betray principles which they have never professed. But they did betray their own dream of a neutral, progressive Hungary when it could no longer be reconciled with the preservation of Communist party rule, and they sided with Kadar against Nagy who clung to the dream. As a last service, they tried to save him by granting him temporary asylum in the Yugoslav Embassy, but they were not strong enough. If they were ever deceived by the Kadar government's promise of safe-conduct for those who would leave the building, their Minister at least must have learnt the truth at the last minute. For the Hungarian officer who headed the escort for Nagy—he is now a refugee abroad—reported to him with the words: "Mr. Prime Minister, it's not home we are going"; and that was still inside the building and before Nagy's final leave-taking from his Yugoslav friends.

THE critical reaction of the Yugoslav Communist rank and file to the Soviet intervention in Hungary proved unexpectedly strong. For the first time, Tito had publicly to admit a mistake. Within a week of the final crushing of the revolution by Soviet tanks, he conceded in his Pula speech that he had been unwise to receive Geroe who had proved himself an unrepentant Stalinist and had brought about the Hungarian tragedy by his incompetent and provocative behaviour. In a further circular he sought to explain the nature of the pressure from Khrushchev to which he had yielded in September. Moreover, he publicly emphasised the issue on which he now disagreed with the official Soviet view—that the rising had started as a genuine working class movement with the active participation of many good Communists, and had only come under the leadership of the "reactionary elements" later on. A month later, Edward Kardelj, the leading ideologist of the party and the architect of many of its anti-Stalinist reforms, who had been silent since the September agreement to support Geroe, went even farther in a speech to the Federal Assembly, and argued that the Hungarian revolution had shown how utterly a monopolistic party, by merging with the state machine and relying on its power, could become estranged from the working class—regardless of whether or not it called itself Communist and claimed to be the vanguard of that class; and he explicitly drew the conclusion that the Yugoslav Communists should show more boldness than hitherto in detaching themselves from the state machine and relying chiefly on their influence in the organs of self-government. But neither Tito nor Kardelj could even now condemn the second and decisive Soviet intervention; the formula adopted by them was that it *might* prove historically justified *if* it led to a better new start of the Communist régime.

Meanwhile, Khrushchev had really suffered a temporary weakening of his domestic position, owing not to Tito's action, but to the actions of the Polish and Hungarian peoples who were subject to no such subtle tactical calculations. Even though the Soviet leaders now shared Tito's contempt for Geroe's incompetence, they could not swallow his view of the total bankruptcy of the Hungarian Stalinist régime and the revolutionary character of the rising; the speeches of Tito and particularly Kardelj gave rise to bitter polemics in the Soviet and international Communist press. The Yugoslavs answered back for a time, most outspoken when Bulganin hinted—at the beginning of April, 1957—at a possible trial of Imre Nagy in which they would be compromised. But the knowledge of the leaders that they had approved the second and decisive Soviet intervention in advance caused them to pull their punches—as it does to this day. Indeed, even this summer, when I asked whether they still considered the second intervention as "historically justified" in the light of subsequent developments including the execution of Nagy, I could not get a single Yugoslav spokesman, whether government official or Central Committee member, to answer on the record with a clear No.

For, while the first after-effect of the Hungarian tragedy within the Yugoslav Party had been to make Tito yield somewhat to the indignation of the rank and file, second thoughts soon made him veer in a different direction. Clearly, the élan of the forces of reform within the satellite countries had been broken by the frightful object lesson of Hungary, and Yugoslavia's own independent ideological influence would henceforth be limited by the ambiguity of her position at the critical moment. In Russia herself, Stalinist reaction seemed once again in

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the ascendant, and if it finally triumphed all the gains of the post-Stalin thaw might be lost. Thus, the one overriding task, after Hungary even more than before, seemed to be to support Khrushchev against the Stalinists. At the end of April, 1957, Tito sent him a personal message offering a renewal of the ideological truce, which was gladly accepted; the press polemics stopped abruptly, and the reformers within the Yugoslav leadership fell silent once again.

Khrushchev, however, did not fail to spot the weakness underlying the move. Shortly after his triumph over Malenkov, Molotov, and Kaganovich, in a speech in a Prague factory he talked of the Yugoslavs in a tone of condescension verging on friendly contempt: he felt sure that the remaining differences would be overcome by frank talk, as he had no objection to the Yugoslavs retaining their own peculiar institutions such as workers' councils—but he would no longer tolerate that they set themselves up as a rival international model. The frank talking subsequently took place in Bucharest at the beginning of August—and it marked the closest point of the rapprochment.

By that time, Khrushchev was fully embarked on plans for some new form of organised co-operation among at least the ruling Communist Parties, which was to consolidate once again the unity of the Soviet bloc and to help restore the international authority of its leading power; and he wanted to make sure that the Yugoslavs, despite their bitter memories of the Cominform, would help rather than hinder the new project. The Bucharest meeting took place in great secrecy, and the final communiqué was ambiguous, talking on one side of obstacles to complete agreement which would still have to be overcome, but on the other of the particular importance both sides attached to "the strengthening, in all its aspects, of the unity and fraternal co-operation of the Communist and Workers' Parties of the peoples of all socialist countries." Since the break, Khrushchev has claimed that at this meeting Tito agreed to come to the 40th anniversary celebrations in Moscow in November and to sign a joint declaration of principles of the ruling Communist Parties; while the Yugoslavs say that they left under the impression of having convinced Khrushchev that they could be more useful to the cause of peace by staying, contrary to his original wish, outside the Soviet bloc. The two versions are not really in conflict, and each of them contains some truth —but hardly the whole truth.

The question of Yugoslavia's joining the Soviet camp in the military sense, by becoming a member of the Warsaw Pact, was not a major subject of discussion at the meeting. Yugoslavia's unwillingness to do so was, of course, a permanent sore point with Khrushchev, and he probably raised it again. But when they declined, he had no need to insist in the light of two considerations: their growing willingness to be "useful to the cause of peace" by supporting Soviet foreign policy all along the line—including, presumably, the promise of an early recognition of the East German government; and their agreement to accept much closer Party ties than before.

In fact, the talks were held strictly on a Party level, with the international secretaries of both Parties present and without any government ministers or officials; and the principal subject was the forthcoming Moscow conference of all the Communist Parties of the world, and the need to issue a joint declaration of principles. If the Yugoslavs agreed to that, they would automatically have to abandon the attitude, first defined by Kardelj in his Oslo speech in 1954, that Eastern Communist and Western "reformist" parties were both making valuable contributions to the cause of socialism, with its corollary that the Soviet bloc had no monopoly of Socialist progress; and they would contribute to rebuilding an international Communist authority whose influence would eventually compel them to rejoin the military bloc as well. That was at least how Khrushchev saw it. Yet Tito did not see it that way; and he agreed to attend the Moscow celebrations and to help prepare a joint declaration of principles without fully realising the inevitable consequences of such a move.

For the Yugoslav leader was now back in the same mood as a year previously, before the Hungarian revolution; and he envisaged the forthcoming Moscow celebrations as the second act to his triumphant tour of Russia—again with Khrushchev as his guide, but this time with the whole élite of international Communism, including Mao Tse-tung, welcoming him back to the fold and listening to his words. The brilliance of the prospect somehow blinded the 65-year-old man to the change in the situation brought about by the Hungarian tragedy, the impending end of the Russian succession crisis, the weakening of his own position and the hardening of Khrushchev's outlook. Once again, as at the time of his visit to Yalta and his agreement to back Geroe, he was willing to stake the future of Yugoslavia on the chance of influencing Khrushchev; and once again he overruled the voices of caution, of which there were many.

During the weeks that followed, Yugoslav non-alignment rapidly disappeared in all but the formal sense. In September, during Gomulka's visit, Tito publicly subscribed to the

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Soviet formula of "proletarian internationalism" as a guide to foreign policy, and even gave his own interpretation of the "leading rôle of the Soviet Union"—in a sense which would recognise its special responsibility for the common cause without impairing the right of each Communist state to its sovereign equality and independence. Soon afterwards, recognition of the East German government followed—a unique act among "non-aligned" states. There remained only one meaning to the refusal to join the Soviet "camp," but that an important one: so long as Yugoslavia was not tied by a higher discipline, its support of Soviet foreign policy, however complete, remained conditional—it could still be withdrawn if Khrushchev tried to interfere with Yugoslav independence or relapsed into a policy of aggressive threats.

It was the Russian attempt to eliminate that last but vital reservation which brought about the recent crisis. As Yugoslavia's new policy increasingly isolated her from the West, as her recognition of Eastern Germany led to a break in relations with Bonn and to public attacks in the United States, while the new heavy sentence on Djilas and the trial of pre-war trade union leaders alienated the sympathy of Western democratic socialists, Khrushchev clearly believed that the time had come to increase the pressure. Suggestions for military arrangements, made through diplomatic channels and through Marshal Zhukov during his visit, became more importunate. There were attempts to interfere in Party matters as well: the new Yugoslav programme promised for the next Party congress, which was to codify the specific outlook of Yugoslav Communism—including, inevitably, its differences to the Soviet variety—had been all but shelved after the Bucharest meeting so as to avoid new disagreements; but now the Soviets asked to see the draft so that they might suggest amendments even before it reached the Yugoslav Party members! The decisive moment came when the Soviet draft for the declaration of principles to be signed by the ruling Communist Parties in Moscow arrived in Belgrade. For though Khrushchev has told the truth in that this draft did not yet contain the formula recognising Soviet leadership (that was only put in later on Mao's suggestion), it was a harsh and uncompromising Cold War document, and clearly faced the Yugoslavs with the implicit choice of either unconditionally joining the Warsaw Pact, or being attacked as "revisionists" and expelled from the Communist family.

When Tito saw that draft, he knew at last that the gamble on his influence with Khruschev had been lost. The dream of his triumphant return to the Communist World General Staff was ended, and his own visit to the Moscow celebrations had to be called off. His deputies, Kardelj and Rankovic, had to make it clear from the start that they would not sign the declaration and were promptly treated in Moscow as outcasts, despite their readiness to sign the almost equally absurd "Peace Manifesto" as a gesture of good will; and when Khrushchev saw them at last, he clearly warned them that they would be attacked. Since then, the Yugoslavs have had to prepare for the new break—and the first measure of preparation consisted precisely in getting the programmatic codification of their own theories ready for their Party congress. Even then, Tito still seems to have entertained the hope that the inevitable disagreement could be contained in the forms of a fraternal discussion among comrades. After the draft had been published and circulated to all Communist parties in February of this year, and the opening blasts of Soviet criticism had been received by correspondence between the Central Committees, he had some amendments adopted so as to mitigate those criticisms of Soviet "hegemonism" and of the Warsaw Pact at which the Russians seemed to take particular offence.

Given these concessions, Tito clearly expected that those East European leaders who wished to preserve some degree of internal independence from Moscow—and among them he included not only Gomulka but Kadar—might, in the interest of their own autonomy, prevail on Khruschev to avoid an outright break. At the end of March, Kadar's wish for an invitation to Yugoslavia—uttered long ago in a very different situation—was suddenly fulfilled, and the need for a joint stand for the autonomous rights of all Communist parties, whatever their theoretical differences, was broached to him. Kadar's reaction seemed friendly enough; but when Khrushchev came to Hungary immediately after Kadar's return he concluded from Kadar's report that Tito was trying to form an "autonomist" bloc with Hungary and Poland, and reacted not only by sanctioning the public attack on the Yugoslav programme, but by demanding from all the satellites what amounted to an immediate break of Party relations with the Yugoslavs: this was the decision not to send fraternal delegates to the Yugoslav congress. It was Kadar's immediate compliance and Gomulka's hesitation which accounted for the lavish praise of the former and the thinly veiled insults against the latter (as well as against Tito) in the somewhat high-spirited speech Khrushchev made on his return to Moscow.

But even apart from these last-minute incidents, it was only logical that Khrushchev, viewing the Yugoslav programme as a counter-document to his own twelve-Party declaration, took it as the occasion for an all-out attack and

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final excommunication. For that document justified in a programmatic form the right of an independent Communist state to remain neutral between the military blocs, by denying, in an elaborate analysis of the contemporary social scene, the Soviet bloc's claim to a monopoly of Socialist Progress. But if these arguments were valid for Yugoslavia, they were equally valid for any and every satellite; if a good Communist could hold these views, it followed that a good Communist was entitled to take any member country out of the Warsaw Pact and declare it neutral. For their own sake, the Yugoslav Communists had finally had to proclaim in a general form the right to neutrality which they had failed to support at the critical moment in Hungary. The Soviets showed their understanding of what was at stake by demonstrating that the right to neutrality did not exist in the Communist world: they excommunicated the Yugoslavs—and they executed Imre Nagy.

THIS end of the adventure has not solved the long-standing disagreements among the Yugoslav leaders, but has made it more difficult to hide them. The critics are naturally inclined to say "I told you so." The conservative bureaucrats, equally naturally, seek to defend their positions by tightening up discipline within the party and by police measures against those critics who were expelled from it in 1954 because they refused to support the wholesale condemnation of Djilas. The resulting atmosphere can be smelt in the off-the-record outburst of one member of the top Party leadership when asked by a Western journalist whether he regarded the execution of Nagy as a sign of strength or of weakness on the part of the Soviet government. "It was a sign of fear" he replied "just as our treatment of Djilas was a sign of fear."

The speaker was very far indeed from sharing Djilas' views about the need for an opposition party; he was merely utterly fed up with the harm done to his country and party by the stupid meddling of the political police with Party affairs. On no previous visit have I heard Party members complain about the activities of the police; this time it happened again and again. The reason is not, so far as I can judge, that the police have become more powerful, but that they are trying to become more active in many petty ways because they feel threatened. I know of no arbitrary arrests; the nearest thing is the case of Zhivko Vnuk, expelled former editor of the Zagreb Party weekly, who at the end of May was hauled in for three or four days of bullying "interrogation." But there have been quite a number of cases of more polite prolonged interrogations of loyal Party members, ranging from their personal relations with expelled critics to questions concerning their reservations during the height of the Tito-Khrushchev flirtation; there has been systematic police interference with the attempts of Party leaders in good standing to bring some of the expelled critics back into the Party; and there has been a real orgy of petty harassment against the expelled men themselves. Not only has Vladimir Dedijer, Tito's biographer, been again and again refused permission to travel abroad since his Stockholm lecture in the spring of last year, when he committed the crime of criticising not his own country, but the Soviet Union—in terms almost identical with those now used in the new Yugoslav party programme, but considered harmful to the ideological truce with Moscow at the time; but the Catholic partisan leader and one-time vice-president of post-war Slovenia, Edward Kocbek, was recently prevented from giving a lecture to a left-wing Catholic group in Trieste, on the ground that he had kept on friendly terms with Dedijer! Most serious of all has been the deterioration—again *after* the break—of the prison régime for Djilas, who since the end of May has lost the privilege of moving about within Mitrovica prison and is now kept in strict isolation: he must not leave his locked cell but for the daily supervised walk. Moreover, he is no longer allowed to read books in any foreign languages, while the completed manuscript of the book he wrote in prison—a biography of the Montenegrine Prince-Bishop and poet Njegos—is still held by the prison authorities.

The political importance of all this pettiness is that the blame for it is widely attributed, not indeed to Tito who is believed to get very little information on these matters, but to Rankovic. Though he has abandoned direct control of the political police years ago, he is generally regarded as its ultimate political chief and protector; and while even critics who know him well describe him as honest and straightforward and do not believe that he would personally stoop to inspire acts of vindictiveness against his old comrades, they claim that his outlook is essentially rigid and narrow and that he covers the stupidities of his subordinates in the belief that he is shielding the régime from the spreading of "hostile influences." But Rankovic's power within the Party has steadily grown in recent years; and while there is no formal basis for the general assumption that he is Tito's designated successor, it finds indirect confirmation not only in the unofficial talk of official spokesmen, but in the changes made in the Party secretariat after the recent congress, when its work was subdivided into a number of commissions: Rankovic was put in charge of the political commission and thus made effective head of the secretariat in Tito's absence, while

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Kardelj, though formally still a member of the secretariat, got no commission and is concentrating more and more on running the administration and developing the organs of self-government.

Clearly, the intended division of labour is that while Kardelj, the ideologue, decentralises the administration, Rankovic, the disciplinarian, will re-centralise the Party whose power remains ultimately decisive. In practice, however, things do not seem to work out wholly in accordance with this classical Leninist recipe. On one side, the tasks of the various self-government organs, from workers' councils through local communes and producers' councils to the parliaments of the national republics, are now so varied that it is practically impossible for the Party leadership to give its members in these various organs concrete directives on more than the broadest issues; on the other hand, decisions must be taken in the light of the local situation, and that means—even with Party members often in the light of local and regional interests. The Party régime does not remain untouched by the growth of a decentralised society; and that growth, stimulated by the economic successes of 1957, by the important concessions granted in the new tax system to the more advanced factories and regions, and by recent efforts to revive the trade unions, may be expected to continue even more vigorously now that its underlying principles have been sanctioned in the new party programme.

All this limits the authority of the top leadership, and that limitation may also prove effective in the question of Tito's succession. It is not a question of personal rivalry: Kardelj, the obvious alternative to Rankovic within the present inner ring, would from all accounts be perfectly content to continue as No. 2 man after Tito's death—which may anyhow still be a long way off. The trouble comes from below: the idea of Rankovic as policy-making leader does not seem to catch on with the party cadres, at any rate not outside Serbia. He rarely speaks in other parts of the country and is not regarded as a unifying national figure. He has not lost the odour of the police, and he represents a conservative outlook whose supporters by now are probably in a minority in the Central Committee, and certainly in a minority lower down. And while formerly the fact of Tito's personal confidence could easily have silenced all these doubts, Tito's own authority within the Party is, after the unhappy adventure with Khruschev, no longer as absolute as it used to be: it is still amply sufficient for the "old man" to carry on, but he will have to pay some heed to trends of opinion within the Party, and he may no longer be strong enough to commit its future by picking his own successor.

For the future belongs to the new post-war generation, which for the first time appeared in numbers at the recent Party congress; and that generation seems in Communist Yugoslavia as much less ideologically-minded than their elders as in Western Europe. Having grown up during the years of conflict with Russia and gradual relaxation at home, most of them seem to have felt as uncomfortable during the pro-Soviet episode as the older reformers, but—at least partly—for different reasons: their criticism attacks the whole illusion of "Yugocentrism," of trying to influence world history from their small and still comparatively poor country; and while they strongly disapprove of a policy which risked the loss of Western confidence and aid in an attempt to wrestle for the soul of Khrushchev, they do not see much sense either in losing Soviet aid because of an ideological programme outlining alternative roads to socialism. They would like to follow their own road, to concentrate on cultivating their own garden, without permitting anybody to interfere but also without pursuing a grandiose dream of Yugoslavia's international mission. They believe that a cautious and modest neutrality which does not unfold any flags but seeks friends wherever possible is what best befits a small Balkan nation, and that a slow but steady expansion of internal freedom will be best for a multi-national country with a bitter history of cival war and revolution And eventually they will have their way.

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LETTERS

"Impasse in the Holy Land"

In his penetrating and very fair analysis of the Palestine problem in your July issue, Mr. Erskine B. Childers correctly lays stress on the Arab fear of unlimited Jewish immigration. This was the bogy which confronted the British throughout the Mandatory period and, perhaps more than any other single factor, led to the surrender of the Mandate. In considering this aspect of the problem, Mr. Childers, however, overlooks the very important question of the present sources of—and pressure for—immigration to Israel. He should have recognised that the desire to settle in Israel varies directly with the condition of Jews in their home countries. Eliminate the source of the desire to migrate and you eliminate the pressure to add to Israel's population.

The reason I did not see your July issue sooner was that I was in North Africa when it appeared. It so happens that the position of Jewish emigration from that part of the world is most apposite to this discussion. There are approximately a quarter of a million Jews in Morocco, 130,000 in Algeria, and 70,000 in Tunisia. Emigration from Algeria and Tunisia is unfettered and the merest trickle is leaving for Israel. In Morocco—where economic conditions are similar to those in Tunisia—there is a ban on emigration and many Jews say they would leave for Israel if they could. Nevertheless, a number of responsible Jews assured me that if freedom to emigrate were granted by the Government only a small fraction of the community would take advantage of it. What they really want is the freedom to leave in case conditions deteriorate to the point where they cannot comfortably remain.

It is clear for all to see that there is no strong urge to migrate to Israel on the part of Jews from the Western countries, who represent nearly 60 per cent of the total world Jewish population of approximately 12 million. The immigration figures are readily available and are virtually insignificant. The remaining 40 per cent of the population are to be found divided (approximately in the proportion of 40 per cent and 60 per cent) between Israel and the U.S.S.R. and its satellites. We are left, therefore, with a potential mass emigration from the U.S.S.R. and its satellites, comprising a total Jewish population of about three million. But this raises a problem of its own which is really *sui generis*.

The Western countries can and, *grosso modo*, have solved their part of the problem posed by Mr. Childers by giving their Jewish populations equal rights with other citizens, including the freedom to leave if they wish. If the Arab fear of unlimited immigration is, as I believe, both genuine and misconceived, there is no people in a stronger position, unfortunately, to dissipate their "obsession" than the Russians.

David Kessler

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"The Crusade that Went Astray"

A cynic might almost be tempted to think Paul Ignotus was using a subtle form of smear technique. The word "Crusade" in the title strikes a warning note. "Moral" occurs with striking frequency; three times in one paragraph. Those who campaign against the H-bomb are actuated by "high selflessness" and "devotion to moral principles." They form a "spiritual élite" for which God must be thanked. Inevitably, therefore—so runs the inference—they are political idiots.

They hardly deserve this rosy spotlight. It is normal procedure for any hard-headed publicity man to begin by creating a climate of opinion. In the field of nuclear disarmament nothing will be achieved until more people, including politicians, make the imaginative effort needed to grasp the ultimate horrors of genetical distortion and strontium in the bones. Harping on this theme may seem crude and optimistic but is at the moment the only course available to those outside Governments, other than waiting while one country after another down to Guatemala poisons the air with bomb-testing.

Perhaps it is not so absurd after all. The Geneva conference of nuclear experts, producing worthwhile results, was called on the initiative of the British Government, the only one of the three concerned which has any formed public opinion prodding it along the road.

Mr. Ignotus, who himself needs no awakening, has little to say on this aspect. In fact he plays down the danger. Scientists are disagreed; medical X-rays are equally bad, and so on. What really interests him are the current political relations of the Great Powers, and here he deploys the full force of his argument. Coming from a man who felt the Russian heel on his own neck, one listens

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with respect. But it does not reach the heart of the matter. Those who campaign against the H-bomb have bigger terms of reference. For them the contention that to do so constitutes going "astray" remains unproven.

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"Personal Knowledge"

PROFESSOR OAKESHOTT'S review of *Personal Knowledge* (ENCOUNTER, September) reminds one how difficult philosophical innovation is. It is true that the argument of the book is difficult, and some may think its expression sometimes crabbed; yet I have found it, in reading and re-reading it, so luminous and so convincing, that I cannot help trying to answer some of the points Professor Oakeshott makes.

The 20th century has produced three major philosophical conceptions which have a good deal in common: Heidegger's *Entwurf*, Whitehead's *prehension*, and Polanyi's *commitment*. They are all intended to transcend the limits of the critical tradition; but only the third, being explicitly the centre of a theory of knowledge, can answer and therefore fittingly transcend the epistemological problems with which critical minds, from Descartes onwards, have been preoccupied. Professor Oakeshott has described the book in which Professor Polanyi expounds the conception of commitment as "a jungle through which the reader must hack his way" and at the same time as containing a "sustained and powerful argument in which a theory of scientific knowledge is elucidated . . ."—though he says again, on the other hand, that to call for a recognition of the personal coefficient in scientific knowledge, as Polanyi does, is "not itself to have formulated a theory of scientific knowledge."

I believe that *Personal Knowledge* does state such a theory, and that it develops it, in Oakeshott's phrase, "in a sustained and powerful argument" of the first philosophical importance. The definitive evidence for this belief is the book itself, in its full cogency; but since so competent a critic as Professor Oakeshott finds so much difficulty in it, I may perhaps venture, as a reader who has seen it at various stages of writing, to suggest what seem to me its principal steps.

Part One establishes the groundwork on which the rest of the argument is built: it establishes the basic analogy between scientific knowing and skilful doing. But this is a statement, almost, of bare fact. Part Two elaborates and extends it to a panorama of the inarticulate aspect of intellectual life. For if knowing is indeed a kind of doing, then the imposing formalisms of science, so authoritative in our culture because of their apparent automatism and impersonality, rest essentially on informal, personal, tacit acts of understanding. This is to be seen, first, in the very nature and development of language itself, which extends the powers of learning that we, in substance, share with other animals; second, in the inarticulate substrata peculiar to our articulate culture, in the intellectual passions that produce and sustain every aspect of science and art; third, in the social and civic loyalties which form and are formed by our intellectual life.

Parts One and Two, though foreshadowing a philosophical argument, are primarily descriptive: we see spread before us the tacit powers and passions which everywhere sustain even the most "detached" and "objective" products of our minds. Upon this panorama Part Three directs a reflective enquiry: How can personal knowledge be justified? The purported total objectivity of exact science has never existed; does anything more exist than the subjective whim of controversialists for one favoured fairy story or another? The argument is here turned upon itself: the philosopher, examining the structure of intellectual commitment, finds himself committed to his theory of commitment in the same way in which the scientist is committed to his scientific theories. The philosopher, like the scientist, is seeking, to the best of his limited powers, to make sense of his experience: appraising it by standards which compel his assent yet which have no ultimate authority, in reason, beyond his own acceptance of them. This adventure, philosophical or scientific, is personal, in the sense of the passage Professor Oakeshott quotes: ". . . In so far as the personal submits to requirements acknowledged by itself as independent of itself, it is not subjective; but in so far as it is an action guided by individual passions, it is not objective either. It transcends the disjunction between subjective and objective." It is through the conception of the personal, involving both the givenness and fallibility of situation and the dignity of universal intent, that the commitment of the philosopher and the scientist is justified. The statement just quoted, therefore, contains the answer to the dilemma of subjectivity versus objectivity from which Polanyi's argument begins, and which, in Part Three, it has turned back to assess reflectively and to resolve. It is not, as Professor Oakeshott seems to think, the statement of a dilemma in which the argument *leaves* its author, but points to the resolution of a difficulty which it has been his central task to face. The scientist is a believing, seeking, fallible person, and this truth is essential to the nature of his scientific knowledge: that is the fact stated in Part One and exhibited on a broader canvas in Part Two. The philosopher, as such a person likewise, now turns in explicit reflection to recognise this paradox; and that very recognition, made explicit, resolves the paradox, or at any rate confirms it, and makes it bearable.

For it *is* true, admittedly, that the paradox of self-set standards—which is the argument's recurrent theme—is not so much resolved as restated: restated in a reflective assessment of the calling of man, be he scientist, citizen, or saint. At the close of a brilliant and corrosive critical tradition, that is all a philosopher can do, and it is enough to do. But at the same time it is never done: the freedom won in the concept of commitment is a Faustian freedom, to be earned only by daily winning it again.

And there, by the way, is the difference between commitment with its hazardous claim to universal validity and the "concrete universal" of the

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Hegelians. They do have a good deal in common and it might be fruitful to trace out this likeness further; but the essential difference is that *Personal Knowledge* is written in the first person, while Hegelian dialectic persists in vanishing in vacuous speculative mists. The answer to Oakeshott's question on this is to be found in Kierkegaard's *Unscientific Postscript*. If *Personal Knowledge* is Hegelian, it is a Hegelianism purged by the Kierkegaardian critique—and not a Hegelian synthesis of the two either, for the existential root of philosophical reflection is an absolute, the only intellectual absolute. The only thing we know for certain, as Tillich puts it, is that we know nothing for certain. Personal knowledge carries within itself the knowledge of its own dubiety; and in this it is more truly sceptical—to answer another of Oakeshott's points—than scepticism itself.

Personally, I should prefer to see this argument, historically, in a Kantian rather than an Hegelian context. The heart of Kant's *First Critique* is the transcendental deduction and the principle on which the transcendental deduction rests is the transcendental unity of apperception: the fact that all experience in so far as it is regular and coherent and reliable is held together and unified by the fact that it is *my* experience. This principle remained for Kant a mere statement of the fact *that* all experience is my experience, because he could not expand it into more than that within the formal framework on which his critical system depends. But if we take Kant's argument seriously, unhampered by the limits of his formalism, it leads straight to the concept of personal knowledge—for it expresses the logical dependence of order on the person who both gives the order and submits to it. And when the transcendental unity is filled in to become a living person, the transcendental object is filled in also to be more than an X behind a phenomenal world. We cannot, indeed, seize upon reality with our hands, but it is reality, not its shadow, which, in hope and humility, we understand, misunderstand, and seek to understand anew.

In Part Three the philosopher has been reflecting on the scientist's calling, which is in its essential structure his own calling too. Part Four, finally, puts this act of reflection, this person striving to make sense of things, into the context of nature: into a stratified world of ever richer living things, "of a myriad centres that have taken the risks of living and believing." The epistemologist knowing his own knowing, and the biologist knowing the ongoings of other living things, here coalesce. Reflection opens out again into a panoramic view on a new and ontological plane, culminating in what Professor Oakeshott describes as "a vision of the natural history of mankind, brilliantly imagined and expressed in sentences of uninflated eloquence." But this is not simply a brilliant afterthought; it is the essential summing up of a profoundly coherent argument—an argument which in turn will take its place in the age-old conversation of the Western mind with itself.

MARJORIE GRENE

Co. Wicklow
Ireland

BANG TO RIGHTS

Frank Norman

Preface by **RAYMOND CHANDLER**

In a previous issue of *Encounter* Frank Norman told of some of his experiences as a "corrective trainee". Now in BANG TO RIGHTS, he tells the full story of his two years in Wandsworth, Chelmsford and Camp Hill prisons. We publish it, *spelling and all*, exactly as we received it from him.

In his preface RAYMOND CHANDLER writes "The situation is there, the people are there and you are there with both; and this is a rare thing. An observation so sharp should not be lost to the world." October 13 15*s*.

Secker & Warburg

"Storm Over the Gentry"—An Awful Warning

IN CASE any of your readers think that the Gentry Controversy is an academic storm in a tea-cup may I be allowed to recount this very moral story of how it blighted my career?

Shortly before my final "schools" at Oxford I was introduced by Mr. Christopher Hill to Professor Tawney's Rise of the Gentry article and to Mr. Stone's Anatomy of the Elizabethan aristocracy. Here was, I thought, a wonderful opportunity to prepare an answer for a question that was "bound to crop up in schools"; so I joyfully and uncritically swallowed the Tawney–Stone thesis hook, line, and sinker and, sure enough, in an English History paper I found a question that I thought was tailor-made for me. It asked us to discuss the idea of Elizabethan society as one of fiercely competitive individualism upon which a Welfare State was imposed, or something to that effect. I was able to display my knowledge of the fortunes of English social classes under Elizabeth and beyond, and I wrote what was the longest, and I thought the best, answer in all my examination papers. Unfortunately the examiners were apparently more inclined to the views of Professor Trevor-Roper and I had obviously done *the wrong thing* for I came down very heavily on that paper and only "got a third."

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The results were disastrous. Since my early youth, spent mainly in the old Imperial War Museum, I had developed an ambition to become a narrator on the Official History of the War project. Alas! my "third" disbarred me, as it did from the Civil Service—"seconds" or better only. In the end I became a bookseller, which I still am. Let others take heed—as Namier once wrote, the historian needs, above all, the capacity to know what did *not* happen, although I am still more inclined to the Tawney side than to the other.

More seriously, I do hope some of the literary critics among your readers and contributors have paid attention to the Storm Over the Gentry. I have listened to many disputes as to whether the "Literary Historian" should be primarily a critic but have not noticed any comparable anxiety expressed that he should be an *historian*. As we all know, the 17th century has been a particularly fruitful period for historico-literary theories, especially since Mr. Eliot's notorious doctrine of the Dis-association of Sensibility which nobody seems to have attacked until Mr. Kermode did so last year. Everyone seems to accept uncritically dogmatic, semi-Marxist interpretations of the period or to think that once you have read Knights' "Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson" you have all the "background" you need, just as, for a later period, Mrs. Leavis' "Fiction and the Reading Public" seems to be regarded as the end rather than the beginning of discussion. Perhaps now literary critics will realise that historical views change continuously and that by real, if not literary, historians, the last word is never said.

A. COMERFORD

London, W.2

SINCE the recent issues of *Encounter* have only recently come to hand in Khartoum, I hope that you will accept a late contribution to the correspondence already elicited by Professor Hexter's *haute popularisation* of the Tawney–Trevor-Roper controversy. Professor Hexter has dismissed the contributions to learned periodicals in which this controversy has been conducted as at best a weighty irrelevance founded on unproven hypotheses and misapplied statistics and at worst as an interested attempt to obscure the true and ancient, Whig interpretation of the English Seventeenth Century. His major thesis—that the methods of the economic historian have not as yet achieved any valid restatement of the history of the Puritan Revolution—has already been rebuffed. His minor thesis seems to be that the phenomenon of the political initiative and rebellion of the House of Commons in the 17th century needs no other explanation than the emancipation of the landed gentry from what he terms "goodlordship"—the military and social control of the 15th century aristocracy. He quotes the comments of Raleigh, Bacon and Selden on the decline of maintenance and bastard feudal armies; then goes far beyond these authorities in suggesting that the Elizabethan and Stuart aristocracy had lost almost all significant political influence beyond what might be implied by a few gentlemen riding in their train. "The magnates had not yet found their vocation for commanding solid phalanxes of borough members sitting in Parliament for the rotten and pocket boroughs that the magnates controlled." For the aristocracy there was, it seems, an eclipse between the politics of the 15th century which Sir John Fortescue bemoaned and those of the 18th century which Sir Lewis Namier has dissected. Yet it was precisely in the 16th and early 17th centuries that the "solid phalanxes of borough members" entered the House of Commons and Sir John Neale has shown that it was at the behest of aristocrats that very many of them took their seats. Much patient research in the last ten years has laid bare the pattern of patronage in the parliaments of the century before the Revolution and much of it was undeniably aristocratic. The House of Commons reflected the persistence of a kind of feudalism in county society: there the principal nobleman was still "the principal weather of the flocke, to goe before the rest." The local organisation of society was still deeply hierarchical. As one might expect of an age in which religious and politico-legal ideas and causes counted for much, the "Namierisation" of the Elizabethan political scene has not as yet yielded any easy explanation of the English Revolution. But it does offer a salutary corrective to all attempts to interpret the history of England in the 17th century in terms of the competing interests of classes. "Household," "family" and "shire": these were concepts which came more readily to the 17th century than thoughts of class. It is a disturbing fact that much of this controversy has been conducted in social terms and categories which the 17th century would not itself have owned.

PATRICK COLLINSON

University of Khartoum
Sudan

I'M afraid I must raise objections to Professor Hexter's offer to inscribe my name on the banners of what I will term neo-Whiggism. I encounter difficulties not as a historian with this or that interpretation of the English 17th century to put forward, but as a historian of ideas who wants to see the interpretation of men's thinking in their social context properly undertaken.

The sequence of schools as I see it was this. First there were the Whigs who said: "Englishmen became divided on questions of religion and liberty, and there was a civil war. The sides men took in this conflict were determined largely by their beliefs on these questions, and to state the issues so raised is to give a good and sufficient explanation of what the conflict was about." Next arose the Marxists—more or less—who said: "Not so. It is possible to divide Englishmen of that period into classes, and to show that some classes fought for the King and some against him. Class, as we use it, is an economic concept, and it therefore follows that the economic interests of the classes

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we distinguish were fundamental, their political behaviour an attempt to realise these interests, and their professions about religion and liberty a rationalisation of these interests."

It is this interpretation which has now broken down, and it seems to have done so for two reasons. The attempt to divide 17th-century Englishmen into classes, and show that these classes may be identified fighting on this side or that, has apparently failed. This has been seen to mean that, if you cannot classify the Englishmen of that time in categories of economic interest, you cannot explain either their actions or their theories as simple consequences of these interests; and this in turn has called in question the whole Marxist concept of ideology as the conscious expression of interest, about which there were always serious difficulties. Neo-Whiggism therefore points out that the attempt to present 17th-century men's beliefs about religion and liberty as rationalisations of class interests has collapsed at two important points—the concept of class and the concept of rationalisation; and it invites us to return to these beliefs as providing an adequate explanation of the predicament these men were in.

The trouble with this contention—and here I suspect that Professor Hexter, who is a brilliant historian of ideas, may be disposed to agree with me—is that it implies relatively little need to study the genesis of these beliefs. The historian of ideas cannot afford to leave it at that. He sees men thinking in a particular context, and he is interested in the relation between the context and the thinking. He starts from the assumption that what men in the 17th century had to say about religion and liberty must have been very largely attempts to account for their own experience and must have been affected by their experience in many ways, and that this experience must have been very largely experience of other men in society. But he is not committed to the view that society must be explained as a pattern of economic classes, and he is not committed to the view that thinking in society must be explained as rationalisation of economic interests. What he would like the profession to do, therefore, is to start again, using theoretical tools less clumsy than "class" and "rationalisation." He would like to be provided with a sociology of 17th-century England which would help him to understand with what objects and problems society presented the mind that began thinking in it, and he must provide tools of his own for understanding how concepts and ideas arose and were used in that society. He continues to think, undogmatically, that man's social being determines his consciousness, and he is prepared to try and study, empirically and experimentally, how this process of determining takes place; he does not suppose it to be a simple matter. He would, in many ways, far rather be termed a "post-Marxist" than a "neo-Whig," and he believes that if men's thinking is treated as a question of what men thought about and how they did it, this study will emerge at the centre, not on the edge, of the problem of what happened in the English Revolution. Unless something like this is done, it will be hard to tell—in the word of an excellent 17th-century historian who was one of the first anti-Whigs—"of what Import and Signification the Men were . . . according to their Several Denominations; of what Power, and Interest they were, what they did, and how they behaved themselves; nor who, nor what they were, that contended with our ancient Kings about *Liberty*, and Relaxation of the Government, nor indeed what truly the Liberties were they contended for."

J. G. A. Pocock

St. John's College
Cambridge

"The Theatre on Trial"

I HAVE just read the article "The Theatre on Trial" in the July issue of ENCOUNTER. I am not sure that I have understood either the article, or the reason for printing it. The opening of the article suggests that you wanted a comment on the present state of the theatre in England, but the article itself is clearly no such thing—it does not seem to me to be clearly anything at all! But perhaps to ask for clarity in any discussion on the theatre is asking too much, as we are nearly all either too ignorant or too incoherent to convey very much of importance to any reader. . . .

Firstly, I have come across little evidence in the writings of our critics to suggest that they know much about the theatre in this country. They know a good deal about the West End—but even then, their views are restricted by the important fact that they nearly always sit in the front rows of the stalls. My own opinions differ in detail and in general from so much of what the critics say because, on the contrary, I see most of my theatre outside London, and when I visit the London theatre it is usually in the gallery. Plays and performances look quite different in the same theatre, and plays and acting can seem very changed from theatre to theatre.

Secondly, I am surprised that so much attention is paid to the playwright by our critics. I think the playwright is a very important person, but the whole set-up of our theatre, and of the academic study of drama in this country, denies the playwright—the living playwright—any real significance whatever. We know almost nothing about the playwrights' craft, and all our criticism is amateur in the extreme. I want to say more about this. . . .

Thirdly, with these thoughts buzzing round my mind, you may expect that I have done something to test my theories (which are still not finalised, still not clear, even to me!) and in a small way I have been conducting a series of experiments in the theatre. I am concerned in particular with creating new conventions for the meeting of audience and actors, so that the actor can communicate with the audience, it is hoped, in a more vital way. This has led us at present to adopt the method usually called "theatre in the round." Theatre in the round can be argued about with great good fun, and it is not necessary that every-

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one should like it any more than it is necessary that everyone should like jellied eels or smoked salmon. Our experiment is most important when we offer theatre to people who have no previous experience of the drama, outside the telly or the cinema. We are doing this at present in Scarborough where the holiday crowds have nowhere to go in the rain except the entertainments—and they enjoy themselves with a gusto that would horrify T. C. Worsley, Kenneth Tynan, Philip Hope-Wallace, old uncle Richard Roud and all. It is too early in the experiment to draw conclusions and perhaps I should be the last person to attempt to do so. I am much too excited with the spectacle of the living theatre really alive to pin the specimen on to the display board.

Fourthly, I am so concerned about the dilemma of the playwright that I have tried to do something about that as well. There are plenty of people who can act—oh, more actors than there are jobs for them!—and plenty of people who try to write plays, but with much less satisfactory results. I am fairly sure that this is because playwriting is a more complex task than we generally agree. Genius apart, there seems to be two requirements for the playwright. One, that he should learn the trade—perhaps by apprenticeship, hack work, and all the concomitants that made Shakespeare and Molière grow into excellence—or perhaps by teaching at university level. The latter is already a practical method in the United States, and we should beware of scorning what the gum-chewers do in case we throw all our Millers and Tennessee Williams down the drain. I have spent a year at an American university and I value the experience highly. As a direct result I am trying to establish courses in playwriting that will attract young writers—and academic authorities. The second requirement—that the merely promising plays of beginning playwrights should be put on the stage in front of an audience. . . . We need a large number of small managements and small theatres—the one or two that you may be able to name (you probably haven't heard of me before—and my company adds a third to your score) are a hundredth of the necessary number to cope with the potential talent.

Finally, all this talk of commitment is immensely enjoyable reading in *Encore* and in arguments with one's chums, but there really is a technique of theatre, and I think it's about time we began to study it seriously, simply, and with humility. Where? Those of us who work in the theatre do not have much time for the immense task, our universities (except Bristol) scorn the drama, our newspapers are too busy catering for readers who are only interested in the "names"—or glamorous chat. What about the magazines? What about ENCOUNTER? And where do we start? For a start I enclose the script of a translation I have just made of an alarmingly clear essay—would you care to publish it?

STEPHEN JOSEPH, M.A., D.S.C.,
Director of Studio Theatre Limited
London, S.W.3

[*Alas, we care not.*—Ed.]

JONATHAN CAPE

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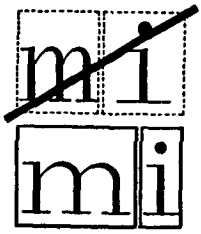

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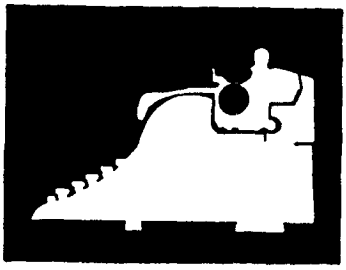

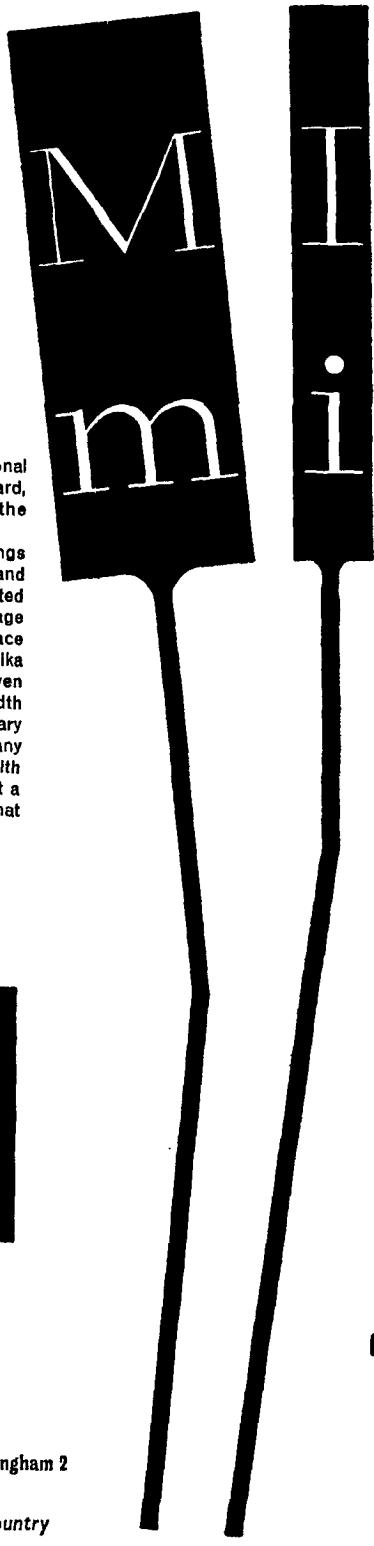

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BOOKS

Unconventional Wisdom

PROFESSOR GALBRAITH has written a searching, relentless, down-to-earth critique of American society in its economic aspects.* And he has written it from a completely American standpoint. The whole European controversy of socialism and anti-socialism is simply by-passed. If the book has an ancestry it is from Veblen, the one wholly original American economist and sociologist. Indeed in mood and method the book is decidedly Veblenesque, for it is often harsh, brash, and with something homespun, in the very best sense of that word, in its texture. But of course Professor Galbraith has an incomparably higher technique of economic analysis at his finger tips than Veblen could command.

The book is in essence a study, at once massive and intricate, of what happens to a society which chooses personal self-enrichment as its national goal or ideal. (Whether or not its author would agree with this characterisation I do not know, for he nowhere puts the matter like this: but that, as I hope this review will establish, is what it comes to.) His first proposition is that Americans, much more than any other people, have set up *the production of things* as their true object of worship. That which promotes production is good, that which hampers it is bad. But (though here Professor Galbraith is, in my opinion, insufficiently specific) the production to be thus worshipped must be of a particular sort. Because (I suggest) personal enrichment is the national ideal, it must be production for profit. It is the profit, Galbraith shows, given off like some precious vapour from the act of production, rather than that act itself, which is the national objective. The emergence of profit alone sanctifies the act of production: whether or not any particular activity will yield a profit is the unique criterion of its desirability.

Consequences of the utmost importance flow from the adoption of this national ideal. On the positive side, to engage in all acts of production which will yield a profit becomes a categorical imperative. In what Professor Galbraith calls "the conventional wisdom," this is justified by the explanation that what it is most profitable to produce will be at the same time what best satisfies a human want. Professor Galbraith agrees (here sketching some of the history of economic thought) that, in the epoch of scarcity, so to some extent it was. The criterion of profitability had a relation, discernible if never exact, to the satisfaction of primary human needs. It could be argued at least that if only the distribution of the national income were not too inequitable, the criterion of profitability would serve the essential purpose of allotting the resources of the community in such a way as best to satisfy the needs of the population. In "the affluent society" it is no longer so. And here Professor Galbraith introduces what is perhaps his most important concept, "the Dependence Effect." The dependence effect is, in the main, simply advertising. But it is advertising raised to the American level of intensity, in which some $11 billion a year—an appreciable part of the gross national product—is spent on it. Such advertising has ceased to be a useful, if noisy, accompaniment of the production and marketing of goods. Such advertising has become an independent force. *It has become nothing less than the prior production of the wants which the subsequent production of the goods is to satisfy.*

When this happens, advertising—in the widest sense of the word—becomes a prime mover of the whole economic system. When a society becomes so affluent that, far from its wants and needs crying out of themselves for satisfaction,

* *The Affluent Society*. By JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH. Hamish Hamilton. 21s.

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it becomes necessary to devote a very real part of the national effort to fabricating them artificially, everything in both the theory and practice of economics has been overturned. When the majority of all families have already had not only their primary needs, but their desires for television sets, for automobiles, for refrigerators and the full catalogue of "consumer durables" satisfied: when it becomes imperatively necessary (in order to continue to produce at a profit) to convince them that they need *another* television receiver, *another* refrigerator and not only another, but a much longer, larger and more glittering automobile, the whole *rationale* of production for profit begins to totter. At that point the needs of men, the satisfaction of which is the sole rational object of economic activity have, like the fibres of our clothing, become man-made or synthetic: they have become secondary and derivative from the productive process itself. And with that the whole process has become circular. For any justification of capitalism to hold water, the consumer and his wants must be assumed to be sovereign. But where is that sovereignty if the consumer's wants must first be elaborately and expensively manufactured for him as a condition of manufacturing the goods to satisfy those wants? The consumer and his wants have become the mere puppets of the categorical imperative to produce at a profit. And if we ask the question why should we produce at a profit if not to satisfy natural human wants, the answer of the conventional wisdom will be that the distillation of profit is the aim and object of human activity, the primacy of which it is impious to question. When a capitalist society has reached the American degree of affluence, the manufacture of wants must at all costs be kept one step ahead of the manufacture of the goods to satisfy those wants. The image of the caged squirrel turning its wheel with every busy step it takes inevitably occurs to Professor Galbraith. The worship of production for profit now that it no longer serves the satisfaction of natural wants, has become an idolatry: how can such a thing for long provide a satisfying national purpose for adult minds?

This, however, is only the first of the consequences of taking personal self-enrichment as the national goal. It is an essential part of the system of production for profit, or capitalism, that men should only draw an income as payment for work. Therefore, in order to receive incomes, they must be kept continuously at work. If the production of goods—for which the need has had to be laboriously synthesised in advance—falters, the incomes of the producers are immediately cut off. The American family with its stock of television sets, refrigerators, automobiles, and all the rest is suddenly left without an income to buy necessities. If the effort to make such families buy one more automobile, with still larger tail fins, one more refrigerator, and one more television set ever fails, some at least of them will be abruptly cast down into a state in which they can hardly buy bread, clothing, or shelter. For their incomes—currently running at the average rate from wages alone of $85 a week—will abruptly stop. And Professor Galbraith traces the full consequences of the inherent instability which such an arrangement involves. He describes how, as an accompaniment of the advertising man's synthesising of wants, the vendor of hire-purchase has involved such families in heavy weekly payments for their last round of television sets, refrigerators, and automobiles. So the abrupt cutting off of their main wage incomes may, in the extreme case, leave them in spite of unemployment benefit with almost nothing to live on. (Professor Galbraith proposes the commonsense remedy of breaking the nexus between employment and income by paying unemployment benefit at almost the full wage levels whenever mass unemployment exists.)

Again, the functioning of the economy depends upon the uninterrupted investment of gigantic sums for the creation of new plant for the manufacture of a still ampler supply of television sets, automobiles, refrigerators, and the rest. If suspicion once crosses the thresholds of the board rooms that enough plant already exists to supply the American people with such things, the system must stall. Therefore, the productive system must not only be run flat out but must continually expand if a proportion of the American wage earners are not periodically to be thrown down from their affluence into the destitution of unemployment. The production of more and more things which are, in that quantity, so useless in themselves that nearly as much effort must be devoted to synthesising a need for them as for actually producing them, cannot be interrupted, upon pain of inflicting destitution upon a substantial section of their producers. The instability thus caused by the maintenance of a rigid nexus between the distribution of income and the production of things which can be sold at a profit, once a society has passed a certain degree of affluence, need hardly be emphasised. Nevertheless, Professor Galbraith does emphasise it by a searching analysis of the inevitability of inflation if an attempt is made to run such an economy continually at capacity and so to provide incomes to all its wage earners. He shows, too, that once the unpleasant effects of inflation have been felt for some time, action will inevitably be taken to check the expansion of the

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DENT

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economy and that this can only be effective in so far as it ruthlessly deprives some millions of wage earners of their incomes. And in fact this very thing was occurring in 1958 between the completion of Professor Galbraith's book and its publication.

But personal enrichment as a national ideal has another consequence in addition to inherent instability. Not only must everything and anything be produced which will yield a profit, however little unsynthesised need there is for it, but nothing, or at least the lowest minimum, of those things the production of which will *not* yield a profit must be produced. This negative side of the worship of production for profit results in a condition which Professor Galbraith calls "social unbalance." (This is his second principal concept.) For it so happens that some of the most urgent of the real needs of an affluent society cannot, in practice, be satisfied by production for profit. These are broadly the needs which cannot be satisfied by the sale of goods or services to individuals, but must be catered for, if at all, by the provision of a public service. They range all the way from such *terre-à-terre*, but not unimportant services as refuse collection, street cleaning, town planning and satisfactory housing for the less well off wage earners to such life and death matters as the maintenance of law and order, education, and, finally, defence.

In a series of striking chapters, Professor Galbraith shows that 20th-century America, by far the richest society which the world has ever known, is stinting itself to an almost insane degree of some or all of these public services. Nor is the reason far to seek. Because their provision cannot be left to private profit-seeking entrepreneurs who will themselves provide (or borrow) the necessary resources in the expectation that they will in due course be recouped manyfold, these services must be provided out of public funds raised by taxation. But in the ideology of a society which has taken personal enrichment as its goal, this has come to mean that their provision is not counted as a form of production at all. On the contrary they are regarded as grievous burdens upon the community, the size of which must be minimised almost at all cost if they are not to break the back of the economy. Municipal services, city planning, streets and roads (without which the automobiles, incidentally, cannot be either parked or run), schools, and more arms are not thought of as "produced" but as something the community has to "pay for." And yet, all unknown to the public, the economists of all political persuasions add together roads and automobiles, schools and refrigerators, arms and television sets, to reach their total of the gross national product, which no one challenges as the measure of the income of the nation.

The consequences of the illusion that only that which is produced for profit constitutes wealth—that all the rest is burden and grief—would be comic if they were not so grave. Here is America, the Croesus of the nations, so rich that she diverts an appreciable part of her resources to an ever more frantic attempt to make people want things for which they have little rational use, half starving herself of essential public services. The American public have been persuaded that they cannot afford to have their garbage adequately collected, their cities properly cleaned, their slums cleared, or even enough parking places and roads built to enable them to use their third or fourth automobile. This is inconvenient and silly rather than tragic. Far more serious for the future of the Republic is the fact that the American people have been led to deny themselves anything approaching an adequate educational system for a community as rich as they are. Professor Galbraith shows that the scope and level of American education today might just be appropriate for a community still struggling with primary poverty and the early uphill tasks of industrialisation. We get a picture of cramped, inadequate, overcrowded, and under-staffed schools, unable to provide the children of the great American cities with facilities for either the work or the play which are the alternatives, for many a vigorous boy or girl, to these street activities which lead to the vast American problem of delinquency. And even in the fields of higher education, in which the quantity is indeed, by the standards of most other countries, very large, he describes a quality of instruction below that provided in many a much poorer country.

Professor Galbraith says a little as to what education at its highest, education as the development of the human being for his or her own sake, and needing no further justification, might do in so rich a community as America. But he bases most of his argument on the simpler proposition that even from the narrow objective of maximising production itself, this neglect of education is fantastically shortsighted. He explains that in the advance of modern technology the human being, the scientist, the engineer, the technician of every grade is becoming much more important than new plant. And yet in the American system, since the new plant is produced for the private profit of its builder, and the new scientist, engineer, or technician is produced at the public charge, the more that is spent on the former the richer, it is supposed, the community will become, but the less that is provided for the latter, the smaller, it is frugally concluded, will be the supposed "burden" on

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production. Yet the education of future producers is almost certainly a much more fruitful form of investment, even on the narrowest calculus of production, than the construction of additional plant.

Finally, we come to the most curious effect of the illusion that all production which is not directly for private profit is not production at all. This is the effect upon defence. Now, nothing is more rooted in the lore of the "left wing" criticism of capitalism than that defence is the one field in which a capitalist government will never stint its public expenditure. Yet present-day American experience bears out this dictum—which I have made a dozen times myself—but partially. The capacity of events in the 20th century to outstrip our current comprehension of them and to render "the conventional wisdom," either in its classical capitalist or its left-wing form, almost comically wrong, has become very great. In the economic field itself, the Marxist prediction of ever-increasing misery has turned out to be the reverse of truth. It is ever-increasing affluence which is in America becoming increasingly incompatible with an unmodified capitalism. And, so curiously does history tease the prophets, that in the field of defence, a similar, if by no means so absolute, a reversal has taken place. It has not turned out to be the wicked armament contractor, avid for dividends from cannon, who rules the roost in the most advanced capitalism. It has been, on the contrary, the American business man, fanatically determined on business as usual, and regarding defence expenditure, since it has to be paid for out of taxation, as a most unpleasant necessity, who has become the representative figure. True, dominant American opinion has not nearly the same degree of hostility to public expenditure upon defence as it has upon public expenditure upon education and the social services. Up to a point contemporary America, with a defence expenditure of nearly $40 billion, or between 18 per cent and 20 per cent of her gross national product, confirms the traditional radical view that this is the one field in which public expenditure is respectable. Nevertheless, Professor Galbraith points out that *on the hypothesis upon which the American Government is working* (he is careful to point out that he considers it a false hypothesis), namely the hypothesis of an implacable and irremediable conflict between America and the Communist world, this is certainly an inadequate expenditure. It is an expenditure which was proved inadequate in the autumn of 1957 when the soaring Russian sputniks revealed to a horrified America that even in some aspects of nuclear warfare the Russians were already ahead of them. More importantly, perhaps, if less dramatically, it was a rate of defence expendi-

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ture which had clearly left America with painfully exiguous conventional forces with which to counter Communist moves in various parts of the world, without resorting to the mutual suicide of nuclear war.

Nor is there any doubt as to the reason why the "business man's administration" of President Eisenhower felt it necessary to cut American defence spending. The President announced the conclusion of his economic sages that there was a mystic figure of some $38 billion which American defence spending could not exceed without gravely damaging the American economy. And yet he did so at a moment when it was necessary somehow to persuade as many American families as possible that they needed still another or newer automobile, with still longer tail fins, in order to keep that economy going. Sir Winston Churchill, at an early stage of the British rearmament programme, said that "we arm to parley." In 1958 the most powerful nation on earth seemed to be getting herself into a position in which she would neither parley nor arm—at least on the scale which would have been necessary to support her intransigent policy. So remarkable are the effects of a fanatical adherence to personal self-enrichment as the goal of life.

THESE are the main concepts of Galbraith's book. There is one further concept which he discusses but only cursorily. And this inadequacy leads on to what is, in my view, the one false conclusion of the book. This further concept is that of equality. Professor Galbraith devotes a chapter to the issue and in the course of it says a number of interesting and important things. He contends, no doubt correctly, that a sort of informal truce has been arranged between American conservatives and liberals on the question of the redistribution of the national income. An appreciable redistribution in the equalitarian direction was effected under the New Deal and in the course of the war of 1940–45. (Professor Galbraith gives the figures.) Very broadly this new pattern of distribution has now been accepted as a norm. The liberals may here and there, but very feebly, try to improve on it: the conservatives, a good deal less feebly, may try to edge back towards the old unequal pattern. But in the main both sides accept the new status quo. And they do so for two weighty reasons. First, both sides are simply afraid of re-opening the fierce social struggles of the thirties, which went quite a measurable distance towards destroying that national unity which Americans, not necessarily irrationally in their conditions, value almost above anything else. Second, on the basis of the rate of expansion of the American national income annually achieved (until a year or two ago) there was far more to be gained by *both* the rich and the poor uniting to produce more than by fighting each other over a static total. Thus the sleeping dogs of social conflict have been prudently let lie.

No doubt this is all true and important. But the trouble is that Professor Galbraith does not seem to see the consequences for the rest of his argument of his own (implicit) acceptance of the present pattern of distribution of the national income. Yet surely his whole argument as to the minimal marginal utility of producing still more automobiles, refrigerators, television receivers, et al., is only valid, *given the present distribution of the national income*. He tells us that the median income of all American families was in 1956 just under $4,000 a year—say £1,000 to £1,100 a year in our purchasing power. That is marvellously high. It is quite true that for the millions of American families well above this median income, an additional automobile, etc. probably has a marginal utility approximating to zero. But surely this is by no means true of the millions of American families with incomes well below the median? An American family with an income of, say, $2,500 a year or less, is by no means affluent—(and there must be, on the figures, an awful lot of them even apart from the "poverty patches" in the Appalachians and elsewhere which Galbraith rightly regards as special cases). A better automobile, a refrigerator, a television receiver has a by no means zero marginal utility for them. Therefore Galbraith's argument against concentrating America's effort on the further production of saleable consumer goods is only correct *on the hypothesis that the present distribution of the national income is taken as a constant*. Shift that distribution in the direction of further equality, and an increased production even of saleable consumer durables will become rational again. After all, the American distribution of the national income is still by no means equalitarian. Galbraith gives the figures in some detail on p. 66 of his book. He shows for example that the highest 10 per cent of American incomes are twenty-seven times higher than the lowest 10 per cent. And that over 16 per cent of all American families had less than $2,000 a year (say £11 a week in British purchasing power).

This consideration seems to me to modify, but not to destroy, much of Galbraith's thesis. After all, it may still be correct to say that the best use for unused American productive capacity would be to provide more education, sanitation, housing, etc., more, in general, of the services of the public sector, even for the worst off 16 per cent of Americans rather than more automobiles, refrigerators, television sets, etc. Again, it remains true that to re-open the social conflict by suggesting a more equitable distribution of the

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national income is an uninviting prospect, from which it is not necessarily craven to shrink. Yet curiously enough, Galbraith has himself proved, though unintentionally, that a more equitable distribution is indispensable if there is to be a rational case for increasing production, at any rate outside the provision of public services. As a matter of fact, and whether we like it or not, the dispute over the distribution of the national income is bound to be re-opened now that "the conventional wisdom" appears to have stopped the growth of the gross national product, as the only way by which the pundits could conceive of stopping inflation. It is, as Galbraith notes, when everybody is getting more cake, and then alone, that people will stop disputing about how big a slice they are to get.

A second omission rather than error of the book is that Galbraith says nothing of government-sponsored foreign lending to the undeveloped world as a method of employing America's productive power to satisfy genuine human needs. Galbraith is, of course, a strong and devoted advocate of such a policy. One must presume that he simply considered that the subject lay outside the scope of his book.

But to note that Galbraith has made what seem to me mistakes and omissions is merely to say he has made a book. The marvel is that he has packed so much original horse sense between his covers.

FINALLY, we come to Galbraith's remedies. These are sketched rather than elaborated. For as he rightly says, *destructive* criticism and analysis, and the more astringent the better, is what America needs today: she is surfeited with cloying "constructiveness." Still Galbraith makes clear the direction in which his thought is moving. It is, I repeat, to cut or at least loosen the nexus between the performance of a job and the receipt of an income. By means of establishing far higher—though varying—levels of unemployment insurance and other social services, and by means of far higher spending on the provision of public services, he would ensure every American family a good basic income, irrespective of the vagaries of the trade cycle. And paradoxically, in doing so he would, doubtless, greatly diminish the intensity of that cycle. In fact as I read his pages a strange thought crossed my mind. What Galbraith was really after was the provision of something uncommonly like old Major Douglass's "national dividend": and it is none the worse for that. Major Douglass's analysis was defective, but his broad conclusion is, *for a society which has reached the American degree of affluence*, unexceptionable. After all, now that one major human community really has reached affluence, why not

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make at least a tentative start with the application of the simple Christian principle of distribution according to need? It would even prove to be extremely beneficial to the economy. As the late Mr. George Bernard Shaw remarked: "Decidedly, whether you think Jesus was God or not, you must admit that he was a first-rate political economist."

Finally, let us note thankfully that Professor Galbraith's book is as much an American product as the silly tail fins on her latest and shiniest cars. And for my part I have no doubt that it is a great book. It is a major work of sociology rather than of economics. But in its own field it will stand being mentioned in the same breath with the one or two books which have made history in our period. Indeed the contrast between it and Keynes' *General Theory* is striking. Keynes' book was a technical treatise expressly addressed to his brother economists. Galbraith's work is extremely readable for any educated man or woman. On the other hand, in style and presentation, where Keynes used the rapier, Galbraith wields a club. But the blunter instrument can accomplish as much execution. In fact, let me take my courage in both hands and predict that twenty years after its publication, *The Affluent Society* will be exercising an influence comparable, though of a very different kind, to that exercised by *The General Theory* today.

John Strachey

Winner Takes All

The Naked Villany. By JOCELYN DAVEY. *Chatto and Windus.* 15s.

Sheldrake. By MICHAEL WHARTON. *Blond and Wingate.* 13s. 6d.

Still Alive Tomorrow. By WAYLAND YOUNG. *Cresset Press.* 16s.

The Delinquents. By ANTHONY BLOOMFIELD. *The Hogarth Press.* 15s.

The Law. By ROGER VAILLAND. *Jonathan Cape.* 15s.

CONFRONTED by a heterogeneous collection of novels to be reviewed together, one is sometimes tempted to try and give them, in a natty opening paragraph, some spurious unity of theme. Usually it is a thankless task. One tends either to produce some pointless generalisation—"all this month's novels deal with contemporary life"—or else parallels and cross-references so ingenious and imaginary that the books themselves, by the time the review is finished, really need to be sent back to their authors for rewriting. So I shall go straight into this lot, leaving my title to suggest, in a simple thought for the month, whatever connecting thread I saw, or fancied I saw, in them.

The Naked Villany isn't a "straight" novel but a detective story: it ought really to be reviewed in staccato phrases in one of those rather arch catalogues favoured in some literary quarters, under some heading like "Murder List": "'Legendary' (*sic*) tycoon Sir Jacob Treverick needs big money to buy up ('For my business? No, for England!') new uranium area before the Germans can (time, 1937). But vital purse-strings are controlled by Jake's cousin, culture-crazy crackpot Erasmus, who wants to tie up the family cash in a scholarly Foundation—'some mad plan for writing ridiculous books,' snaps Jake. So Erasmus hires inimitable gabbling don-detective Ambrose Usher (Oxford, of course) to lecture to his Foundation on philosophy ('I enjoyed your articles in *Mind*'); whereupon Jake promptly counter-hires him to detect—ostensibly Bach manuscripts, but they're just red herrings. Crime at last on page 137: the clue's in the Bible, but poor old Inspector Halibut didn't get it, and neither did I. All rather improbable, but very polished and frolicsome."

Reverting to English prose, perhaps a non-addict might add that, although he personally prefers his thrillers to touch life at some point he can recognise or at least imagine, all who enjoy high-table mystery stories will enjoy this one. Mr. Davey's style is light and witty, with none of the pseudo-Jamesian mannerisms sometimes found in this kind of book. It is written, too, with great taste and charm, qualities I was inclined to underrate until I read *Sheldrake*.

Mr. Wharton's novel is also unrealistic, but it takes us into a world not of intrigue but of nightmare fantasy. Sheldrake is a Major invited to give a lecture at Borewich, a peculiar northern industrial city, the only place in England where they have brought back the trams and re-laid the cobblestones. Some of the opening scenes are quite funny, and one thinks one is in for some more provincial knockabout; but the atmosphere is queer and we soon find that Borewich wants to become independent of the rest of England, and the Major finds himself in command of a revolution.

What follows is nothing like *Passport to Pimlico*. Borewich in fact is a sort of surrealist allegory of some people's crazy dreams of decentralisation. Does the author (said on the cover to be an anarcho-conservative) feel some sympathy with this idea? As developed here, it

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is crude, violent, savagely absurd: for instance, two M.P.s are caught and eaten by the locals, led by a mad priest called Father MacAlcohol; this scene of cannibalism is deliberately horrible.

If Mr. Wharton intends satire, then one may ask, as Orwell once did in a different context, whether it is possible to make good satire out of an idea which no one could take seriously. I would readily grant that Mr. Wharton has considerable literary powers and a remarkable imagination, but his distortion is so complete as to be almost meaningless and unrelated to any reality.

Still Alive Tomorrow, whatever its faults, is a straight novel, obviously written with all the guts and experience at its author's command. It isn't entirely satisfactory, but I found it more interesting than many smoother successes that attempt less. It is one of those autobiographical novels which one always feels one would like to discuss with the author. This not being possible, one reviews it instead and curses the inadequacy of one's trade. "Mr. Wayland Young is clearly a very intelligent man, but...." How often does some such phrase sum up six months' hard work.

Mr. Young's novel is set in Morocco. Charles Cretan, an English journalist, tough, sensitive, apparently successful in his personal life, is out there to report the political situation. At the same time he is worrying, in the good old English way, about his own past. A girl called Ruth, with whom he was in love, killed herself seven years before the story opens. Her last letter to him was misfiled at the poste restante: he gets it at the beginning of the book. But if he had got it before, would it have made any difference? Was he responsible in any way for her death, or was she the kind who would have committed suicide anyway? Charles's guilt comes from his having been in love with two girls at once: he married the other one. The novel alternates between reportage of the present and flashbacks to the hero's past love-life. It is these latter, over-lush, idealised, that let the book down, which is a shame, because they are obviously the part which matters most to the author. But it often happens like that. If you don't write from the heart (or have no heart to write from) your book will be stone dead; if you do, you may fail to convince by your very honesty. Mr. Young tends to dramatise sex, as if he has not yet quite decided how it is to be dealt with. There are occasional passages here which read like an autobiographical wallow dolled up with "fine" writing. I thought, too, that there was something rather arbitrary and contrived about the finding of the letter as a starting-point. All the same, *Still Alive Tomorrow* is not an ordinary novel, and its

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qualities are those of a writer who takes his world and his art seriously.

The Delinquents is a tough, thoughtful, interesting story of moral realities. It's set in what might be called the off-Hamilton country, an English seaside town (Eastbourne?) where Pillings, a magistrate and local pillar, is up to some nasty tricks with Penny and Belle, two of the local teenagers. His daughter Mary falls in love with the lover of Penny's mother, Rolly Gunther, a thirty-seven year old civil servant who cooks his own chops and has a taste for low life. The publishers' blurb makes the obligatory mention of angry young men, but the whole point is that Rolly is not like that at all. He is mild and plump, a secret rebel not a loud-mouthed one, who "obeys the letter of the law and spits on its spirit." People like him are much more common than angries, but are rarely described so convincingly as here. The Rollo-Mary love story, the gradual interaction of his cheerful cynicism and her idealism, is very well done. The psychopathology of Pillings and the activities of those who live on the fringe of the law are tied in to the love-story not only on the plot-level (in an age when serious novels have poor plots, this is a good and exciting one) but also by Mr. Bloomfield's power to analyse material which most contemporary writers are content to use as picaresque *genre*-stuff. This book goes well below the surface of contemporary disquiet, and I found it rewarding.

Lastly, the toughest and most professional of this month's batch, a knock-out best-seller from France. *The Law* is the name of a game played in Southern Italy. A group of players settle round a café table and choose a chief and a deputy, who have the right to question, taunt, insult, and generally humiliate the others in a verbal wrestling match with no holds barred. The rest have to submit in the hope that the next drawing of lots will give them a turn as chief and the right to impose the law. We witness only one session of the game, quite early in the book. But the rules of "The Law" are also the rules of life itself, or anyway of life as lived in Porto Manacore. This game could obviously only be played in a small community where everyone knows everyone else's passions, vices, and desires. M. Vailland sees life in this tiny marsh-town, under a baking sexual sun, as a struggle for survival, with rules imposed ultimately by fate but applied by each inhabitant, as opportunity permits, with all the cunning and ruthlessness at his or her command. In a place where there was less poverty, less vendetta, and more contact with the outside world, this symbolism would perhaps be artificial. But in Porto Manacore, a completely closed and corrupt little world, it works out very convincingly.

This is a highly readable novel, brilliantly translated by Peter Wiles: a study of the state of nature, a piece of extremely effective sociology in fictional form. On the surface, its conventions don't tie up much with the complexities of our anonymous welfare state. But it makes a welcome break from the endearing moralistic muddles of our high-minded Anglo-saxon autobiographer-heroes. And when on the last page the heroine comes out on top and we read that "she no longer sang, now that she had a television set," we may begin to wonder whether, after all, the game isn't the same everywhere.

K. W. Gransden

Speaking of Shakespeare

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ment, my ear, and my imagination were not fully satisfied. . . ."

It seems admirable, but almost too brave, to preface these recordings with such a reminder. One can only reflect that one has very little idea how Betterton can have spoken Shakespeare. The modern play-goer who reads his Shakespeare probably has an inner aural image of how the plays should sound. This ideal performance of the "inner ear" is derived from his reading the printed page, and if he spoke what he was reading aloud, he probably could not reproduce even for himself what his "inner ear reads." Thus our extreme regard for Shakespeare as literature creates a gulf for us between the stage that is our own minds when we are in our studies, and that of the theatre. Myself I find that at any performance of Shakespeare it takes me about ten or fifteen minutes to adjust my preconceived hearing of the words to what I am hearing on the stage (for the first ten minutes this often sounds to me complete gibberish, and then suddenly I can accept the acting spoken idiom). I imagine that many other readers and spectators have a similar experience.

One feels that some Shakespearean actors speak verse far better than others. Yet it is difficult to relate even the best contemporary spoken and acted Shakespeare to what one imagines to have been the Elizabethan declamation—which was possibly closer to Japanese as declaimed in Noh Plays or Kabuki than to anything one hears in Europe. Thus the citation from Betterton's biography suggests an impossible past rather than an ideal attainable by the Marlowe Society or anyone else.

An intimate non-stage reading is nevertheless possible and could attain a high degree of understanding if it were, say, the result of many meetings between friends who understood Shakespeare well and also read well aloud. The Marlowe Society perhaps has some such aim—a kind of Chamber Music version of Shakespearean symphonies. All the same, one cannot pretend that these recordings derive from or create such conditions. They are, vocally, a good deal a hotch-potchery of the voices of professional actors and actresses, mixed up with the clipped accents of dons, and the lyrical tones of more or less innocent virginal undergraduates. But there is a unity of serious purpose, and this makes for a gratifying intensity. The voices are sometimes beautiful, and the diction always clear.

The quality of the readings varies a good deal from play to play, though I expect listeners would disagree as to their favourites. I cannot judge *Othello* because for some reason I was not sent it. But of the others, I thought *Troilus and Cressida* and *Coriolanus* the most rewarding, perhaps because they were (from the director's point of view) over-balanced towards acting and declamation, so that I became involved in the action while listening to them. *As You Like It* is also very successful, and, just listening, without seeing the contemporary unboylike Rosalind, one is swept away by a charm which seems like the youth of all the world. *Richard II* is much too conscious diction for my liking. Perhaps to emphasise the Marloweishness of the Shakespearean line at this time, the readers seem to take a good long pause as for a drink of invisible lemonade at the end of every line, throughout the entire duration of the play. I preferred Mr. John Neville's diction at the Old Vic when he was Richard.

One would expect these recordings by devotees of pure diction and perfectly explicit meaning to compare all too favourably with the spoken Shakespeare of the contemporary stage. Actually, I think, the theatre compares favourably with them. And although I often feel critical of the cuttings and acrobatics of producers, listening to the whole of *Coriolanus* solemnly read out makes me think how kind producers after all are in giving us a picture of Shakespeare in which the metaphors that are dead trees are cut down, enabling us to have a whole view of the living wood.

So these records are not in competition with the modern stage. They are an extremely useful complement and introduction to it, and as such they should be treasured.

Stephen Spender

Bright'un—or Rotting Dean?

The Personality of Jonathan Swift. By Irvin Ehrenpreis. *Methuen.* 15s.

In sourer moments one sometimes feels that half the contemporary critical machine is geared to the indirect debunk. It is not the debunk direct, as practised by Lytton Strachey, a comparatively straightforward gleeful exposing of the feet of clay and wholesome just because of that element of glee: the indirect debunk wears a long and serious face, the features fixed in an emblem of solemn enquiry, and masquerades as a sincere effort "to approach the understanding of the works through a better and more intimate knowledge of the man." *"Laudable endeavour"*!—and yet the hidden motive is the reduction of the extraordinary man to the common norm, the assurance to the reader that he need not feel inferior or envious or admiring or abashed, that Milton, Shelley, Arnold are "just folks," who happened to take

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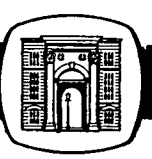

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COLLINS

up literature rather than real-estate or engineering.

Swift has not proved a very happy subject for such treatment. The necessity (from the plain man's point of view) to debunk him has nevertheless been particularly great: scornful, virulent, intellectually aristocratic, and possessed of perhaps the lowest opinion of human nature on record, he eminently invites the Yahoos' revenge. All the same he is only too evidently not "just folks." More drastic treatment has been reserved for him; he has been erected into a sort of Romantic Anti-Hero, obscene, insane, impotent, scribbling unmentionable malignities in the shadow of the mad-house wall. It was difficult to make Swift ridiculous: it was not difficult to make him mad.

By a bland use of hindsight even the works of Swift's early manhood, which speak (to any unprejudiced reader) in the accents of almost unparalleled intellectual control, are made to seem to us no more than preludes to breakdown and fragmentation of personality. It is in this spirit that Thackeray speaks of Swift's knowing "that the night will come and the inevitable hag with it. What a night, my God, it was! What a lonely rage and long agony." Huxley, Murry, and Orwell explain him in terms of diseased sexuality: thus Huxley, "Swift's greatness lies in the intensity, the almost insane violence of that 'hatred of bowels' which is the essence of his misanthropy and which underlies the whole of his work." The whole of his work indeed! This is not so much explaining as explaining away. What a double convenience, after all!—it makes a splendid eikon of Swift, an easily grasped pseudo-romantic simplification of him as the genius-lunatic, a neatly trussed pigeon for a psychologico-literary pigeon-hole: and when his satire cuts too near the bone, we can turn it aside as the mere manifestation of a compulsive psychosis.

A new study of Swift's personality, therefore, seemed likely to prove no more than the reiteration of an already ill-told tale. Professor Ehrenpreis however is no debunker nor (to quote his subject) "smeared with the foul name of critic." He thinks for himself, he regards fact, and he is without pre-judgments. His reassessment will, to most people (of whom I am not one), appear astonishing. He concludes that, in any important sense, Swift was not mad and was not sexually unbalanced.

Obviously I cannot rehearse more than the merest travesty of his line of argument here. With regard to the madness, Dr. Ehrenpreis concedes at once that Swift had a markedly "compulsive" personality. There is no doubt of that. But then, in no less degree, so had Samuel Johnson—there is nothing to choose between them in the matter. We do not call Johnson mad. But how far this compulsive personality has any valid bearing on the actual writings is quite another question: Dr. Ehrenpreis quotes with approval the noble words of Lionel Trilling—

"Of the artist we must say that whatever elements of neurosis he has in common with his fellow mortals, the one part of him that is healthy, by any conceivable definition of health, is that which gives him the power to conceive, to plan, to work, and to bring his work to a conclusion."

As to actual insanity, Swift lived to be seventy-eight. Up to the age of seventy-five he showed (to quote the judgment of the eminent physician W. R. Wilde, delivered so long ago as 1849) "no symptom whatever of mental disease, beyond the ordinary decay of nature." Sir Walter Russell Brain, the neurologist, completely endorses Wilde's opinion. Up till that age Swift's minutes and diaries and accounts are entirely coherent. He then suffered a brain lesion, with consequent aphasia or dislocation of the power of language. The condition is somewhat analogous to what is commonly termed a stroke: it is purely organic and not psychotic.

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With regard to the sexual imbalance commonly supposed to be shown in such poems as the notorious *A Beautiful Young Nymph going to Bed*, Dr. Ehrenpreis shows that writings strictly analogous to this are not at all uncharacteristic of the period. Dryden's free versions of Juvenal's satires, for instance, in places make Swift seem almost tender. We do not regard Dryden as a sex-psychotic. We must see Swift in the context of his own epoch, not of ours. Certainly Swift's relations with women are not normal, but the emotional life is capable of many and protean manifestations all nevertheless comfortably on the hither side of psychosis. I should, for example, rate Swift's sexual patterns as distinctly less odd than Lewis Carroll's: that does not mean, however, that I should regard the artistic integrity of *Alice Through the Looking-Glass* as in any way invalidated by those patterns.

I gave due warning that I should be able to provide no more than the merest sketch of Dr. Ehrenpreis's argument. Fortunately, that is not necessary. *The Personality of Jonathan Swift* is short, clear, cogent, and excellently written. There is a great deal of hard scholarship behind it, but we sense it rather than have it obtruded upon us. No one who is interested in Swift should fail to read it. Anyone who is interested (in the other sense) in maintaining the old fiction of Swift the genius-lunatic will find himself with a tough case to answer.

Hilary Corke

Beyond Politics

Collected Plays. By Arthur Miller. *Cresset Press.* 25s.

"*A play cannot be equated with a political philosophy, at least not in the way a smaller number, by simple multiplication, can be assimilated into a larger. I do not believe that any work of art can help but be diminished by its adherence to a political programme, including its author's, and not for any reason other than that there is no political programme —any more than there is a theory of tragedy— which can compass the complexities of real life.*"

This clear and obvious thought, by the dramatist to whom the word "committed" has been most constantly applied, should long ago have settled the controversy which recently raged in this country—if raged be the word for exchanges as formal as the cries of "Hear, Hear" and "Shame" across the floor of a parliament which has long since ceased to be divided by any real hostility—about the function of the dramatist in society. A great play is greater than a good political ideal because it contains an endless variety of truths, and a political belief contains only one. *King Lear* is certainly a play about authority, about the fallibility of power and about the deep similarity between the Justice and the thief. It is more than all this because it is also a tragedy, a thing of lasting appeal because, as Arthur Miller says, we need to face the fact of death in order to strengthen ourselves for life. Minor drama can state the facts of the struggle which obsesses us, great drama must always live past this to the point of reconciliation; the moment of peace which contains all sides, none of which can ever be entirely right.

So the end of a great play is more satisfying than the end of a legal trial or a political victory—it should go beyond mere justice.

These thoughts have been prompted by Arthur Miller's collected plays, a book which contains some of the best writing to have been done in any medium and surely one of the great plays of this century. It is such a great play that almost any view can be taken of it, and it is fascinating to learn that it was hailed by a right-wing critic, considered decadent by the *Daily Worker*, banned in Russia, and caused its author to be invited to address a number of congresses of American salesmen. It must represent that miraculous period of a writer's life when every word he puts on paper is inevitable and every character he writes about lives independently and with his own particular voice. From the collected plays it seems that this triumph was the result of years of work on eight or nine forgotten plays, and a bitter—if finally rewarded—struggle for a writer who clearly lacks facility or any easy, individual style. The book begins with "All my Sons," which seems to me quite unconvincing, and ends with "A View from the Bridge," which has been forever spoilt for me by the memory of its London production. It also contains "The Crucible," that magnificent cry for sanity in a world where the nightmares are closing in. Because it is more theatrical, and because it includes the world of physical love, this is a better play about the life-force than ever Shaw was able to manage.

Reading these plays in England you may wonder why our own realistic writers often seem, by comparison, to be doing no more than exploring their own personal fantasies. However Arthur Miller belongs neither to England nor America, just as Willy Loman is the property of no single dramatic theory or political view point. He is us because he contains us all.

John Mortimer

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About Our Authors

MICHAEL YOUNG, who was secretary of the Research Department of the Labour Party from 1945–50, is now the Director of the Institute of Community Studies. He is the author (with Peter Willmott) of *Family and Kinship in East London,* a study of family life in Bethnal Green, published by Routledge in 1957. His article is extracted from a new book, The *Rise of the Meritocracy*, which is to be published by Thames and Hudson in November.

Richard Lowenthal writes:

"I was born in Berlin 50 years ago, joined the German Communist Party as a student in 1926, was expelled from it three years later (for opposing the view that, at a time when the Nazis were rising, the 'Socialfascists,' i.e. the Social Democrats, were the 'main enemy'), and spent the next years in left-wing socialist groups, first in the usual vain efforts to unite the Left and stop Hitler from getting power, and then in underground activity against him. I had to emigrate late in '35, came to Britain the following year, lived through the war, and made up my mind to stay here, abandon active politics, and learn the trade of journalism. I have since worked as a correspondent first for Reuter's, then for the *Observer,* and for the last few years as a foreign affairs commentator for the latter.

"The study of totalitarian dictatorship in all its forms has remained my chief interest; in recent years, I have published a number of essays and am now engaged on a book in this field. Yugoslavia has been to me since 1951 a fascinating example of what happens if a Communist dictatorship tries to reform itself; I have now visited it nine times."

We regret that a typographical error distorted a passage in Robin Marris' "Socialist Thoughts Out of Season" which we published in last month's issue. The sentence which read: "I believe the unfavourable outlook is due basically to the fact that the implied transformation of capitalism is still incomplete, but I do not—repeat, not—believe that we must neither nationalise the whole of industry nor go back to the old capitalism"

should have been

"I believe the unfavourable outlook is due basically to the fact that the implied transformation of capitalism is still incomplete, but I do not—repeat, not—believe that we must either nationalise the whole of industry or go back to the old capitalism."

WILLIAM H. WHYTE JR. is the author of *The Organisation Man.* . . . Gerd Ruge's interview with Pasternak appeared in our March 1958 issue. . . . Albert Dasnoy's essay "On Vulgarity" was published in the February, 1955, ENCOUNTER.

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